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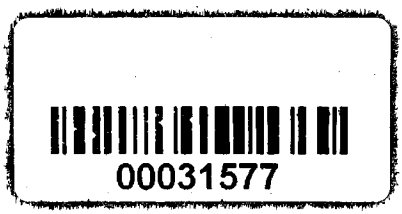

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THE

HISTORY OF NAPOLEON I

LANFREY

VOL. III.

THE HISTORY

OF

NAPOLEON THE FIRST

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BY

P. LANFREY

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ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY
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THE HISTORY OF NAPOLEON.

CHAPTER I.

NAPOLEON AND POLAND. CAMPAIGNS OF PULTUSK AND EYLAU. (*November* 1806—*February* 1807.)

THE decree of Berlin, the execution of the first measures of the continental blockade, together with the declarations which had preceded and followed this extraordinary act, comprised an entirely new system of politics, and the results which ensued from it were as nothing compared with the apprehensions to which it gave rise. Hitherto the gigantic prospects which for so long had occupied Napoleon's mind, had only been divulged by abrupt speeches that might have been taken for imprudent expressions or the sudden outbursts of passion, which would have no perceptible influence on his conduct. When he was several times heard to exclaim 'that he would conquer England on the continent,' no one ever thought of attributing to him the foolish plan of conquering the continent to arm it against England. Nevertheless such was the idea that had in reality taken hold of him. To have conceived the thought however was nothing; the danger lay in expressing it publicly, and it was just this which, in the intoxication into which the victory of Jena had thrown him, he ventured to do. Though at first inclined to observe certain limits in the midst of his success, and to accord peace to the King of Prussia at the price of all his provinces situated on this side of the Elbe, the rapid crumbling of the Prussian monarchy, the silent stupor of the governments, and the apparent resignation of the nations, made

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him lose all sense of moderation. He thought that he had only one more step to take in order to be master of Europe, that it was useless to dissemble any longer; he therefore disclosed his secret, as if he feared it would not be guessed. He declared that he would not restore Prussia and the conquered countries till England had restored our colonies. He announced his intention 'of reconquering the sea upon land and recovering Pondicherry upon the Oder and the Vistula.' He summoned the continental states to choose between war with England and war with France. He rendered neutrality impossible. He gave them the alternative of declaring themselves our enemies or our allies.

By our allies, he meant our subjects. There could no longer be any doubt upon this point since Bonaparte directed French politics. The harsh treatment to which he had subjected states that misfortune or blindness had placed at his mercy, allowed of no hesitation in those who could still attempt a struggle or prepare resistance. To the European powers the continental blockade, with the arrogant explanations that accompanied it, represented something more than the privations, misery, and vexations of this unprecedented league of custom-house officers: it exhibited to them with alarming distinctness the inexorable dilemma of a war with Napoleon, or submissive compliance to his will. To place them by degrees and unconsciously between such alternatives was rash in the extreme, and it is very doubtful whether the genius of Napoleon would ever have sufficed for the task, even with forces superior to those which he could command; but to throw down the gauntlet before he had made it impossible for them to pick it up, was sheer madness. To attempt the enterprise was chimerical; to boast of it was the most puerile and dangerous bravado. This avowal was equivalent to a claim to an universal kingdom. It was declaring to Europe that she was henceforth to form but one state under a despotism of iron. It is impossible to deny that there existed at that time strong elements of unity in the disposition and ideas of the European nations, which had been created by the long

teaching of the eighteenth century. It is to this commencement of intellectual and moral unity that we owed the facility with which we had been everywhere able to overthrow old institutions. It is thanks to this, that Napoleon had so promptly succeeded in establishing his domination over so many nations; and, to put it abstractly, he historically represented nothing more than a premature effort of these elements to combine and coalesce. But happily Europe possessed too much intelligence, independence, energy, and moral dignity; too much true civilization, in a word, for this great transformation—which the future will doubtless see—to be effected by the means of brute force, and to be personified by a tyrant. It was enough for it to be displayed in the form of a revived Cæsarism of the Lower Empire to cause it to be rejected with horror.

Such was the fresh attitude which Bonaparte had just assumed in his last manifestoes, after his brilliant triumphs over the Prussian monarchy. This change which had been prepared for long before, did not at once strike all minds, nor were its consequences immediately felt, but it deserves the more notice because it marks the exact period at which France lost that marvellous power of attraction which she derived from her revolution, and which gave her her temporary influence. Hitherto, in spite of all the acts of violence and treachery which had dispelled their illusions, the nations had continued to regard her as an instrument of deliverance and liberation: they henceforth began to consider her as the fearful personification of conquest, oppression, and despotism. At the time of our entrance into Poland, we had striking evidence of the existence of these sentiments among a people who by nature, by tradition, and by interest were the least disposed to share them.

Napoleon, after having definitely refused to grant to the King of Prussia the treaty of peace which he had first offered, had flattered himself that he could force him to accept an armistice, which would permit our army peaceably to take up their winter-quarters and organize the conquered country, while waiting for a renewal of hostilities. But King Frederick William, though

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greatly dispirited by the misfortunes that had fallen upon him, had not so completely lost his head as to yield such great advantages to his enemy without some sort of compensation. He refused to ratify the suspension of arms, which his representatives had signed in order to gain time, and Napoleon was compelled, in spite of the bad season, to carry on the war on the Vistula and to occupy suddenly the Polish provinces. (November 1806.)

As early as the time of his entrance into Berlin, he had foreseen the possibility of this event. The moment he understood that Poland would become the theatre of the war, he immediately thought of turning the patriotism of the Poles to account. He had received the deputies from Prussian Poland, and had encouraged them by his warm words. He had done more. He had entered into formal engagements with them. 'When I see thirty or forty thousand Poles armed,' he had said to them, 'I will proclaim your independence at Warsaw, and when it comes from me it will be secure!'[1]

He had written to Fouché to send him Kosciusko. He had sent to Italy, and to all parts of the empire for Dombrowski and other Polish officers, who were serving in our army, and had charged them to enrol and organize their countrymen. That he had in them a precious auxiliary, a lever of incalculable power, it was impossible to doubt, after the services which the Polish legions had already rendered us, and the inexpressible enthusiasm with which our soldiers had been received. It is still less possible to doubt it at the present time, when we think of all that Napoleon was able to obtain from the Poles, by mere half promises which he always evaded. That the re-establishment of Poland was an eminently just cause, a reparation necessary for a right equilibrium of Europe, is a truth that history has demonstrated with perfect evidence, and Bonaparte did not fail to invoke this argument in his diplomatic manifestoes of this period, whenever he had to justify his own encroachments. He invariably represented them as a legitimate

[1] Napoleon's address in reply to one from Xavier Dzialynski, November 19, 1806.

return for the partition of Poland. We may add, too, that this cause was far more popular in France at that time than it has ever been since. The ancient ties which united the two countries had been strengthened by a fraternity of arms, contracted in the midst of dangers which had surrounded our revolution. The Polish legions had mingled their blood with ours upon our most distant and most glorious fields of battle: Sulkowski had fallen at Cairo, Jablonowski in St. Domingo, and Dombrowski and Zajonchek had rendered their names illustrious in all our campaigns. When therefore the man who had turned to such good account the remembrance of the misfortunes of Poland and the illusions of her heroism, appeared as a conqueror upon the frontier of these unfortunate provinces, the inhabitants went out in crowds to meet him, and endeavoured to read the secret of their destinies in the words, by turns obscure and reassuring, which fell from his lips. Each asked himself the twofold question, which historians still discuss: *Could* Napoleon re-establish Poland? and if he could, *Would* he do it?

To the question, whether he could really do it, in the unparalleled situation which he had created for himself in Europe, there are several very strong reasons for replying in the affirmative. It may reasonably be said that Napoleon, with the irresistible power with which he was then armed,—with Prussia crushed, Austria annihilated, and Russia powerless abroad, with the invincible national spirit which the Polish population manifested,—could have raised Poland by a word, and after having raised her was strong enough to maintain her. It was, it is true, far more difficult to complete this task than to commence it. The problem was not how to establish Poland, but how to give her a stable government. Napoleon had, however, a means of consolidating his work—that of securing by solemn pledges the concurrence of one of the powers whom he had set himself to humiliate and bring so low. Be this as it may, as the question belongs to the domain of historical conjectures, it is doomed to remain the subject of indefinite controversy; but if it is allowable to doubt whether this great resurrection depended

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solely on Napoleon, if it may even be denied that he possessed such power, it is indubitable that he *believed he did*; and it is, as I think, from this point of view that his conduct should be judged. His enigmatical policy towards Poland has generally been attributed to his desire to avoid making engagements that he would be unable to fulfil, to his dread of undertaking a task that he could not accomplish, of compromising the patriots whom he would afterwards be forced to abandon to their enemies. Such scruples would doubtless be honourable, but it must be acknowledged that they would have been very novel in him, and that they had been long dormant. If he had been alive to them, how would he have dared to do all that he did in Poland? Were not the thousands of men who rose to his appeal deceived? Did not they think that they were fighting for their country? How can we admit, moreover, that the man, who long before his power had attained this prodigious development, had not hesitated to provoke all Europe, sometimes for the possession of an island in the Mediterranean, sometimes for the satisfaction of a personal hatred, sometimes even for the vain pleasure of defying a power by claiming the right of passage through a neutral territory, who at that very moment had just exasperated all the European governments by an enterprise a thousand times more chimerical and dangerous than the establishment of Poland,—I mean the continental blockade,—how can we admit that, having acquired such an unheard-of degree of power, he would have considered as impossible the task of raising up a warlike nation, unanimous in its wishes, and who gave so many proofs of its indomitable vitality?

It is, therefore, incorrect to say that he was deterred by the difficulty of the undertaking or the fear of displeasing the European powers, for his resolutions had never at any time been much influenced by these motives. He had arrived at a period of his life in which his insatiable spirit only seemed to find in the impossibility of a project an additional stimulus to attempt it; similar in this to those worn-out voluptuaries who can only be excited by the obstacles that are put in their way.

He by no means considered that it was beyond his power to re-establish the independence of Poland, *but he did not wish to do it,* or if the transient wish entered his mind, he promptly banished it; and in this, whatever may be said to the contrary, he was only consistent with his character and his situation. How could he wish for independence in Poland, he who suppressed it in all other nations; and even more resolutely among his allies than among his declared enemies? How could he flatter himself, moreover, that he could give the Poles independence without giving them at the same time liberty? How could he think that when once these generous and patriotic passions were let loose among fifteen millions of men, he would remain their master, and govern them at his pleasure? that the contagion of these noble sentiments would not sooner or later be communicated to his army; which, in spite of all, was still the daughter of the French Revolution? that the effect of this emotion, the sight of this spectacle, would have no effect on so many nations that were then mute and terrified, but who had not forgotten that they had known better days? The restoration of Poland involved a complete change in Napoleon's policy, in France as well as in Europe. It involved abroad the adoption of a system of moderation and equity that was calculated to give us the concurrence of all the nations in this great work of reparation; it involved at home a return to the generous traditions of 1789, for it is not given to a slave to play the part of a liberator. Napoleon was not a man to wish for anything of the kind, especially in the position in which fortune had placed him. He was at that time only occupied about one thing—the complete bondage of Europe—and he believed that he was on the point of realizing this ambitious dream. He could therefore only regard a great national movement, bursting as it were on his path, as an embarrassment which might become a danger. Whatever he did, he was certain of the sympathy and support of the majority of the Poles. In order to preserve his influence over them, he only needed to give them half promises, and not to excite a national insurrection. He therefore only encouraged the Poles just so

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far as was necessary to obtain their services. If circumstances became more difficult, he would have time to proclaim the independence of Poland. It was an expedient which he held in reserve for last extremities; a means of intimidation with the powers of the North; a sword always suspended over their heads.

Conjectures founded upon the character, the antecedents, and the situation of a man, are not vain hypotheses. Confirmed by his subsequent conduct, they constitute a certainty. They henceforth presented themselves so naturally to every clear-sighted mind, that when once the first emotion was calmed, and in the midst of illusions easily understood, which the presence of the French army in Poland created, a feeling of doubt and mistrust manifested itself among the men who were the most enlightened and the most devoted to their country. To the demand that was made them, to organize a general insurrection in Poland, they replied by requiring that Napoleon should begin by proclaiming their independence. This has been blamed in them as a sort of betrayal of their country. It has been said, that such distrust was insulting and unseasonable; and these different reproaches have been grounded on a fact which certain writers regard as undoubted; namely, that Napoleon *sincerely wished* for the re-establishment of Poland.[1] But it is just this which has to be proved; and this proof is so much the more necessary, because whatever other qualities Napoleon may have possessed, his character was not remarkable for sincerity. What powerful reasons, then, had the Poles for having this blind faith in him; for placing themselves body and soul in his hands, without even requiring as a pledge some positive declaration? Was this pledge then so sure? If they considered his previous conduct towards other nations, how many times had he not only recognised and proclaimed, but guaranteed by solemn treaties, the independence of peoples whom he had by turns oppressed and betrayed? What had he done with the independence of the second Venetian Republic,

[1] Bignon, Thibaudeau, Thiers, etc.

which he had first created and then sold? What had he done with the Batavian, Cisalpine, Ligurian, and Helvetian republics, guaranteed by him in the treaty of Lunéville? What had he done at the time of the expedition to Egypt with the independence of Turkey, so often recognised by him as necessary to the equilibrium of Europe? What had he done with the independence of Spain, his ally? Were these the precedents that were to inspire confidence in the Poles? And if they considered his previous relations with themselves, his policy towards their own cause, did they find there at least something to reassure them? After so much encouragement secured from him at the time of the formation of the legions of Dombrowski, had they not seen him, when he was reconciled with the Emperor Paul, order the books which they had published in favour of their country to be seized in France? Had they not seen him shortly after conclude with this same Russian government a treaty which delivered over to the Czar the Polish refugees in France, in exchange for the French emigrants in Russia?[1] If these facts, which were still present to the memory of the nation, were not a clear proof that, after having compromised them and turned them to account, he would abandon them as soon as he saw a personal advantage in doing so, did they not at any rate give the Poles a right to demand a positive and formal engagement? What was it, after all, so exorbitant that they required, before they gave themselves wholly and unreservedly to him? Nothing more than one of those promises of which he had been so lavish—one of those declarations so often made and contradicted! Was this too much to ask, before the lives and property of a whole people were delivered up to him?

Such were the reflections which made the most enlightened leaders of the Polish nation hesitate to thrust their fellow-countrymen into the arms of Napoleon. Their scruples arose out of the purest patriotism, and they would have been guilty towards their country if they had not expressed them. Kosciusko,

[1] See on this subject vol. ii.

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who lived in Paris, and was intimately acquainted with the most eminent men of the time, among whom it suffices to mention Lafayette, and who had seen closely the working of this harsh despotism, openly declared that he could not offer his sword to Napoleon, without previously stipulating for some guarantee for the independence and liberty of his country. The principal members of the Polish nobility spoke in the same way, as soon as they perceived, after the scenes of inexpressible enthusiasm which hailed our entrance into Posen and Warsaw, that instead of proclaiming their independence, as they had so fully expected, their liberators only replied to these transports by an enigmatical attitude, and began to ask them to make every sacrifice without being willing to enter into any engagement themselves. Those of Napoleon's lieutenants who were interested in the Polish cause, undertook to transmit these views to their master, and beg him to yield to them. Davoust wrote to him from Warsaw, December 1st: 'Public spirit is excellent at Warsaw, but the nobles are using their influence to calm the ardour which is general among the middle classes. The uncertainty of the future alarms them, and they let it be clearly understood that they will make no movement, unless by declaring their independence, we make a tacit engagement to guarantee it.' Murat, who cherished a secret hope of becoming King of Poland, entreated him still more warmly to pronounce this by a public and irrevocable declaration.

This counsel reached Napoleon just at a time when it was most likely to make an impression on his mind. He had been at Posen for several days; he had made his entry into the town under a triumphal arch, upon which was read this inscription: '*To the Liberator of Poland.*'[1] He had been received with transports of joy, and he boasted in all his letters of the patriotism and enthusiasm of the Poles. He had printed in the *Moniteur* that the partition of Poland was 'the most infamous spoliation of which history bears record.'[2] Instead of exaggerating the difficulties of the restoration of Poland, he calculated the forces of his enemies as very inferior to what they really were.

[1] *Moniteur* of Dec. 19, 1806. [2] *Moniteur* of Dec. 12, 1806.

He only reckoned Bennigsen's army at forty or fifty thousand men, which he thought he could very easily crush. In this state of mind, examining, according to his constant habit, the different chances which were open to him, before making a decision, he willingly cherished the idea of turning to account the grand movement which he saw manifested around us, by creating in Poland a sort of buttress for the fragile edifice of the Confederation of the Rhine, and at the same time a vast reservoir of men and horses for his future wars. In his anxiety to secure the choice of acting in one way or another according to circumstances, he wrote on the 1st of December to Andréossy, his ambassador at Vienna, to tranquillize the Emperor of Austria, by declaring to him 'that the insurrection of Poland was a natural consequence of the presence of the French . . . . that he had no intention whatever of interfering with Austrian Poland . . . but that if the emperor, feeling the difficulty of holding Austrian Poland in the midst of this movement, was willing to accept as an indemnity *a portion of Silesia*, Napoleon was ready to make the exchange.'[1]

As this proposition is the only proof ever alleged for Napoleon's pretended projects in favour of the independence of Poland, it deserves an attentive examination. It must first be observed that Napoleon offered Austria, not Silesia, as has so often been asserted, but a *portion* of Silesia, which is very different. It may further be remarked, that according to his invariable custom, he offered an indemnity taken from a neighbour, and more likely to alarm Austria than to seduce her, for the acceptance of Silesia would have been equivalent to a rupture with Prussia, Russia, and England. If Napoleon had sincerely wished to gain a power, which had only co-operated in the partition of Poland with repugnance, and almost under duress, he had in his hands a hundred other indemnities far better calculated to satisfy her than this province, which he was offering before he had conquered it. The strong places of Silesia, which he was disposing of so liberally, were in reality still in the power of the Prussians. It must also be remembered that this offer, which was almost

[1] Napoleon to Andréossy, December 1, 1806.

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derisive, so insufficient and precarious was it, was made to a power pitilessly crushed by the treaty of Presburg, driven to extremities by the most humiliating proceedings, and reduced only to look for safety in our own ruin. We are therefore justified in concluding, that, however infatuated Napoleon may then have been, his offer of a part of Silesia was not a serious one. He looked upon it rather as a means of sounding the dispositions of Austria, an opportunity of forcing her to manifest her secret sentiments, than as a bait likely to win her.

The same day on which he charged Andréossy to make this insidious proposition to Austria, Napoleon published, in his thirty-sixth bulletin, what may be called the terms of the problem of the Polish resurrection.

'It is difficult,' he said, 'to depict the enthusiasm of the Poles. Our entrance into Warsaw was a triumph, and the feeling displayed by Poles of all classes since our arrival can hardly be expressed. The love of their country and the national sentiment have not only been kept alive in the heart of the nation, but have been strengthened by misfortune. Their strongest passion, their greatest desire, is again to become a nation. The rich quit their castles to come and demand with loud cries the restoration of the nation, and offer their children, their fortune, and their influence.'

The statement of these facts in one of those famous bulletins, which had already changed the face of Europe, was in itself a plea for the re-establishment of Poland, and to the Poles especially only one conclusion appeared possible, after such decisive grounds in favour of it. But it suited Napoleon to state the problem, and not to solve it. He accordingly raised the following question: 'Will the throne of Poland be established? Will this great nation recover its existence and its independence? Will it rise again from the tomb?' Then, instead of drawing some conclusions, and replying to these questions as a statesman who has to give a reason for his opinion, instead of dispelling illusions or putting an end to uncertainty by a frank and loyal declaration, tracing for each

one the line of duty, he suddenly took refuge in a sort of theological subterfuge, such as casuists alone have the privilege of employing: '*God only*,' he replied, '*who holds in his hands the thread of all events, is the arbiter of this great political problem!*'

If all that Napoleon could do for the Poles was to refer them to God, it was not worth while to have an army of five hundred thousand men. Any monk would have sufficed for that. It was announcing clearly enough that he reserved to himself the right of settling the question later, in whatever manner best suited his interests; but when he stated this ambiguous proposition, which might have been worded by an augur, he knew full well that the Poles would only read the premisses, and be the willing dupes of his equivocal conclusion. The next day, December 2nd, Napoleon received the letter in which Murat informed him of the conditions which a part of the Polish nobility made in giving their concurrence; viz. the previous recognition of the independence of Poland. 'The Poles, who display so much caution,' he immediately replied, 'who ask for so many guarantees before they declare themselves, are egotists, whom the love of their country has not inflamed. My greatness does not depend on the help of a few thousand Poles. It is for them to profit by the present circumstances: *it is not for me to take the first step.* Let them show a firm resolution to render themselves independent; let them engage to support the king who should be given to them, *and then I shall see what I can do* . . . . . Make them feel that I am not come to beg a throne for one of my relatives; I have thrones enough for my family!' What was it that they asked for, in exchange for the generous blood that they were ready to shed for him? A word; and in the very legitimate fear which they experienced of seeing their country sacrificed afresh, after so many successive disastrous and sterile immolations, he feigned only to perceive selfish calculations; he only found in it a pretext for vain accusations of pride, or even for undignified abuse. In the same way he pretended only to regard the unexpected opposition of Kosciusko as an *act of folly.* He had felt

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so sure of obtaining the adhesion of this great citizen by the mere prospect of the personal advantages which the co-operation of the Emperor seemed to promise him, that he published in the *Moniteur* a false proclamation of Kosciusko, inviting his fellow-citizens to range themselves under the banner of the invincible Napoleon; but this fraud was immediately exposed by Kosciusko himself, and Napoleon's anger was so much the warmer, that he was little prepared for such a disappointment.

From this moment there was a division among the leaders of the Polish nation, some, such as Joseph Poniatowski and Zajonchek, Wybicki and Dombrowski, still continuing to trust him, in spite of his reticence; others,—but they were far less numerous,—preferring abstention till he had consented to give them the guarantee that they demanded. A third party, at the head of which was Prince Adam Czartoryski, one of the most active of Alexander's young counsellors, persisted in hoping for the regeneration of Poland from the good will of the Czar. This illusion was perhaps as great as the other, but in the desperate situation in which the Polish patriots were then placed, they could scarcely live except by illusions. They were not, moreover, wrong in reckoning on Alexander's generosity; they were only mistaken in attributing to him more power than he possessed. Alexander was not unworthy of the confidence he inspired. His character blended Byzantine subtlety with really lofty sentiments; but, notwithstanding his power, he could not with impunity have touched the integrity of the empire.

One of the nobles who rallied round the Czar—Count Michael Oginski—very clearly expressed the feeling of mistrust which estranged a number of the Poles from Napoleon; and there is really very little to add to what he wrote on this point. In explanation of the motives which had guided his conduct, he said, in a memoir addressed in 1811 to the Emperor Alexander: 'For the re-establishment of an independent country, it would be necessary to suppose that Napoleon possessed those liberal views, that moderation, disinterestedness, and generosity of

character which are by no means compatible with his eagerness to conquer, with his urgency to weaken, to divide and to destroy all the states of Europe, with his indifference to the welfare and tranquillity of the nations . . . And how can we imagine that this favourite of fortune, who believes himself sent from God to rule the affairs of the whole world, that this overreaching man, who has destroyed so many thrones, who has raised up some few others only to strengthen his own grandeur; who changes his resolutions and projects as quickly as he conceives them; who has never troubled himself about the happiness of men, and who only values them so far as they offer him their arms for the execution of his designs:—how can we suppose, I say, that this extraordinary man, who cares nothing for the unfortunate lot of Europe which he has thrown into confusion, should care about the sad position of the Poles, and that he should wish to re-establish their country, by insuring them a free and independent government?'[1]

Nothing could be more just or more striking than these reflections; nothing more justified by the subsequent conduct of Napoleon towards the Poles. Whatever may be said in his excuse,—and even admitting that the hesitations of some among them may have released him from his responsibility,—it is not the less true that he knowingly deceived that part of the nation who persisted in trusting him to the end, unless it be maintained that the annexation of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw to the kingdom of Saxony was a sufficient compensation for the levies of men and the requisitions which from this time he did not cease to make in Poland. Between Napoleon and the Poles, who gave themselves to him, there was henceforth a tacit compact, of which the condition was a blind and absolute devotion on their side, and on his the restoration of their country. Till the end of his reign he contrived to preserve their confidence by half promises and half measures and expressions of double meaning, which gave almost equal satisfaction to the Poles and to their enemies.

[1] Mémoires du Comte Oginski, vol. iii.

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'I could not,' wrote Prince Czartoryski, in 1809, 'help being astonished at the art with which Napoleon propagated, and accredited at the same time, the most contrary conjectures and opinions. It is certain that though he wrote despatches and made speeches that ought to have raised the indignation of the Poles, or driven them to despair, he nevertheless succeeded in spreading among us the conviction that not only had he the interest of Poland at heart, but that he had a particular feeling of affection for our nation. . . . In order to awaken enthusiasm, he had only to publish a newspaper article, or send to Warsaw one of his Polish aides-de-camp, who, received into every society, repeated Napoleon's words, or related some anecdote which touched the patriots. *We lived on that for several months, and then another emissary came to raise our spirits.*'[1]

What would have happened if the whole of Poland had followed the example of these credulous men, who, in spite of so many bitter deceptions, gave him their lives with such magnificent prodigality from Somo-Sierra to Leipsic? It is scarcely possible that it would have changed the fate either of Europe or of the Poles themselves. He would not the less have abandoned them at Tilsit, to extend his hand to the powerful emperor, who brought to his aid, what he appreciated the most in the world, a strongly-organized despotic government; to rid Europe of the obnoxious spectacle of a free and independent power; he would not the less have deceived them by half measures and promises which he always eluded. This success, in short, would in no wise have hindered him from committing a single one of the faults which caused his ruin; but we tremble to think of the difficulties which the heroism of a fanaticised nation would have added to the struggle. Despairing patriotism easily becomes illuminism, especially among a people whose character is at once mystical and chivalrous. In spite of Napoleon's numberless deceptions, of which the Poles were

[1] Correspondence of Alexander I with Prince Czartoryski, published by Ch. de Mazade.

the victims, we have seen, in our own time, their poets and their thinkers institute in honour of his memory a kind of worship, under the name of *Messianism*. This singular circumstance plainly indicates how dangerous such an arm might have become, wielded by such hands; and, instead of blaming the patriots who refused to trust blindly in him, we ought rather to say that they have deserved well of Europe and of civilization. Napoleon could have liberated Poland, and there was one of the finest chances of true greatness that his marvellous fortune offered him; but he could only do it on condition that he changed his system, and those who looked for such a miraculous conversion were bound to require from him a guarantee of his intentions.

Very different were his views at the opening of this new campaign. 'To conquer the sea by land,' was the theme of all his letters; and by the side of this undefined programme, which was suited admirably to the restlessness and the adventurous tendencies of his genius, the patient and delicate task of re-establishing Poland could only appear a troublesome diversion. From his youth he had had a strong passion for grand enterprises that offered an unlimited perspective to his ambition; but even in Egypt, where he had shown his predilection for those vast utopias, the evident insufficiency of his resources had forced him to fall back upon the second plan. Now that he had reached the climax of his power through a thousand prodigies, he no longer believed that anything was impossible, and he yielded without resistance to the tyranny which these gigantic and chimerical plans exercised over his imagination. When he marched against Russia, he had no longer as formerly a settled and definite aim; he had in view, as a first result, the complete submission of Europe; but beyond that, he dreamed of something more, and that was the empire of the world.

His genius, so eminently calculating and positive, fully displayed itself in the working of the powerful means of action which insured him the government of so vast an empire. Thanks to the vote of the Senate, which had allowed him to

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draw the conscripts of 1807[1], he had now, either in France, or in the countries under his domination, nearly six hundred thousand men under his orders: with this number, which then seemed almost inexhaustible, he had easily been able to fill up the ranks in his army, and even to increase the effective. In order to remedy the evils which arose from the distance, and at the same time to utilize the troops that were as yet inexperienced, he had transported his depots of conscripts, which had hitherto remained on the Rhine, to places on the Elbe and the Oder. Here these young soldiers took the place of troops that were more useful on the field of battle; they sufficed for a garrison, and employed their leisure hours in military exercises; they served to maintain our communications, and they were in Napoleon's reach in case of danger. He had reinforced his cavalry, and had remounted it in the great parks, created by Frederick, and kept up by his successor with a care which had made the Prussian cavalry the finest in Europe. He had, moreover, organized in all the places through which his army passed, at Erfurt, at Magdeburg, at Spandau, at Cüstrin, great stores of provisions and ammunition of every kind. His basis of operations was no longer France, but Prussia. He had transformed the whole of this country into a sort of great arsenal. The old administration was maintained under the direction of M. Daru; they still continued to gather the ordinary taxes, together with our contributions of war; and very soon all the resources of the kingdom were employed for the support of our army. The requisitions which were then levied on the conquered provinces (Prussia, Hesse, Hanover, Brunswick, and the Hanseatic Towns), either in money, in provisions, or in the shape of the seizure of English merchandise, cannot be estimated at less than four hundred millions.

The army that was to be maintained by these enormous tributes amounted to more than three hundred thousand men,

[1] 'It is evident,' said Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély, when he asked the Senate for these 80,000 conscripts, 'that in the interest of the people *it is better to send more brave men to the combat, for it will cost the fewer brave men to obtain victory.*'—*Moniteur* of December 5, 1806.

when all the corps on march. had effected their junction. But this army, however powerful and alarming it still was, had already lost its former character, and no longer possessed more than a portion of those rare qualities which had constituted its force and its originality. Military writers have pointed out in a special manner the mischief which afterwards befell from the too great extension of the regiments, and the dispersion of the battalions. The evil to which I allude was far graver and more profound; one which impaired the very constitution of the army. If there is an instructive lesson in history, it is the spectacle of this despotism, founded wholly on military force, gradually weakening and ruining without being aware of it, and in some measure by the sole vice of its own development, the admirable instrument to which it owes all. It would be a serious omission not to notice the progress of this slow but continuous perversion of our military institutions, for it became more apparent as the empire extended, and it was not long before the first effects were to be felt. Bonaparte had, from his very beginning, changed the spirit of the army by substituting dreams of glory, of ambition, of riches, for patriotic motives. This change was far from being immaterial, but its consequences were not immediately perceived, for passion for conquest had at first appeared advantageously to replace the old revolutionary enthusiasm. After his elevation to the supreme power, he had gone still further. He had endeavoured to separate the army from the nation, to withdraw it from the influence of civilians, to create for it independent resources, a special treasury, wealthy endowments, which opened up a new career to its ambitious chiefs. They were no longer the soldiers of the country, but the soldiers of the Emperor; they were the instruments of his fortune, and not the defenders of the people. He went a step further at the time of the campaigns of Austerlitz and Jena, by introducing into our army, hitherto so compact, elements taken from the conquered countries.

In this we have strong evidence that his political errors betrayed his military genius, for if it is certain that the enormous size of the new empire, and the colossal enterprises of its chief,

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rendered this additional military force indispensable for the maintenance of exhausted France; it is more certain still that the admission into our ranks of these auxiliary corps, which could only serve reluctantly, dealt a fatal blow to the discipline, ardour, and unity of our army. The national sentiment, the great homogeneity of thought and action, which had made our army a living and harmonious whole that nothing seemed able to break up, was first weakened, and by degrees lost in this cosmopolitan mass, who had neither our character, our manners and customs, nor our passions, and who did not even speak our language. The foreign contingent of the army which marched against Russia towards the end of the year 1806, rose to nearly a hundred thousand men. There were Italians, Swiss, Dutch, Würtembergers, Bavarians, Hessians, Saxons, Poles; there were even Prussians. 'His majesty,' said Napoleon, in his forty-second bulletin, 'has ordered a regiment to be formed in the Prussian states beyond the Elbe, which will meet in Münster.' He very quickly recognised the strange consequences to which this system would one day lead; but he found it too convenient to change. 'The Swiss regiments,' he wrote to Fouché, the 20th of February 1807, 'are enlisting Prussian prisoners, so that *I might have the extraordinary policy of having France protected by my enemies.*' Still, however extraordinary this system was, he nevertheless persisted in it, and on this side, as well as on so many others, this great parody of the Roman empire contained from its origin all the defects which Rome only knew towards her decline, and which she only submitted to with reluctance in order to delay the hour of her inevitable downfall. Napoleon determined to have even Spaniards in his army. The 15th of December he ordered Talleyrand to negotiate with King Charles IV for the dispatch of an auxiliary corps of fifteen thousand men, and in order to take them as far as possible from their country, he confided to them the defence of Hamburg and the other Hanseatic towns.[1]

His aim, in this circumstance, was not so much to obtain a

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, December 15, 1806.

few more regiments, as to weaken and disarm Spain, on which he was beginning to build projects which, though as yet somewhat indefinite, were alarming for the future of the country. For a long time weary of a burdensome alliance, overwhelmed with humiliations, ruined by our extortions, and treated as a conquered country, whose provinces were ceded without even consulting her, Spain had seen in the war with Prussia an opportunity of assuming towards Napoleon, if not a hostile, at any rate an independent attitude. A proclamation of the Prince of Peace had called the Spaniards to arms, to defend the liberty of their country against an enemy whom he did not name;[1] but after the news of the victory of Jena the customary silence had again reigned, and their submission had become the more absolute as the revolt had been more imminent. Spain was glad to gain pardon for this feeble velleity, by the dispatch of a contingent of fifteen thousand men. She never suspected that this pledge of docility, instead of appeasing her imperious ally, was only a prelude to the sacrifices which he was about to impose upon her.

Napoleon, who was always ready to support the effort of his armies by that of diplomacy, when the time for negotiations was passed, had seen his offers rejected by Austria. That power had been too cruelly wounded to be accessible to such tardy advances. Since she could not be gained, she had to be kept in awe. The army of the viceroy was concentrated in Friuli, under the orders of Masséna, combining with Marmont's corps which occupied Dalmatia. These troops formed a total of seventy-five thousand men, all ready to march into the valley of the Danube. They sufficed provisionally to neutralize Austria. Our diplomacy had been more successful with the Porte. So great is the power of interests and situations that, in spite of the remembrance of the violent and disloyal rupture which had given Egypt to us, an unhoped-for reconciliation had just been effected between France and Turkey. Napoleon, who fully understood the value of a diversion created for our

[1] Dated October 5. See Toreno, *Histoire de la révolution d'Espagne*, vol. i.

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benefit against the Russians, had endeavoured to mislead and encourage the Sultan Selim. He reminded him of the ancient ties which united the two countries, of their community of interests, and of the uninterrupted march of Russian invasions towards Constantinople. Even before the Porte had broken with Russia, he solemnly engaged in all his manifestoes to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman empire. As early as the month of June, 1806, while he was negotiating with M. d'Oubril a treaty of peace between France and Russia, he urged Selim to declare himself against Alexander, by changing on his own authority the hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia, whom the Sultan could only name in concert with the Czar.[1] In order to hasten this event, he accredited to the Divan a skilful, active, and devoted agent, whose mission may be summed up in a single word—to draw Turkey into the war.

The hatred, rivalry, and divisions of every kind, which had for so long existed between the Porte and Russia, rendered Sebastiani's task comparatively light; it was facilitated, too, by the character of Selim, who was a weak and credulous man, of excellent intentions but perfectly incapable of following a regular system. Sebastiani employed by turns promises and intimidation. He threatened him with our army of Dalmatia, which was in close contact with Montenegro, Albania, and the most restless populations of the Turkish empire. Under the influence of these solicitations, Selim expelled the two hospodars on the 30th of August, 1806. It was then that Constantinople learned that the Czar had refused to ratify the treaty of peace, signed at Paris by d'Oubril. Sebastiani became more urgent. He summoned the Sultan to choose at once between the enmity of France or that of Russia.[2] Selim, intimidated, forbade the Russian vessels access to the Bosphorus; then soon after, still more alarmed by the threats of the representatives of England and Russia, he re-established in Wallachia and Moldavia the two hospodars whom he had dismissed, without however breaking with France. But it was already too late to recede;

[1] Napoleon to the Sultan Selim, June 20, 1806.

[2] Sebastiani's note, dated September 16, 1806,

a Russian army under the command of General Michelson, had entered the Principalities, and Turkey found herself irrevocably engaged in a perilous war, for the glory of an ally whose name could only remind her of the bitterest deceptions, and of whose doubtful fidelity she was about to have a fresh experience.

Napoleon saw with a transport of joy the diversion that served his purposes so well. 'Take courage,' he wrote to Selim, on the 11th of November, '*the destinies have promised that your empire shall last; I have a mission to save it, and I will share with you my victories!*'[1] On the 1st of December following he renewed these assurances in the most flattering terms, and ordered Sebastiani to sign with the Sultan a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, by which he guaranteed to the Porte *the integrity of her provinces of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia, and engaged only to make peace with Russia in connection with her.*[2] In order to make these engagements appear still more irrevocable, he recorded them in his bulletins and in his messages to the Senate, dwelling particularly on the disgrace it would be to France if we were to abandon Turkey, and the danger that would result for 'civilized Europe.' In one of his manifestoes, addressed to the Senate, he wrote: 'If the Greek tiara were triumphant from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, we should see in our days our provinces attacked by a cloud of fanatics and barbarians. Our culpable indifference would rightly provoke the complaints of posterity, and we should justly deserve the opprobrium of history.' (January 20, 1807.) He very soon showed how he took this reprobation of history and posterity into account.

He announced to this assembly at the same time that the Emperor of Persia was about to send his troops into the Caucasus, and he informed them of the entrance of Saxony into the Confederation of the Rhine. Such were in fact the new allies that Napoleon had gained, or rather had enchained to his cause. With regard to Persia, the announcement was somewhat premature. His agent, M. Amédée Jaubert, who had

[1] Correspondence, *loc. cit.*

[2] Napoleon to Sebastiani, December 1, 1806.

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arrived at Teheran in June 1806, after innumerable perils, had only sent reports of propositions, and the treaty was not signed till May 1807. But as no one could verify the fact, and as the name of Persia figured well on the programme, it was left to bear witness to our extensive influence.

Against this formidable league, which united under the same standard so many different nations, Russia appeared little able to sustain a contest. Prussia, placed *hors de combat*, could only furnish about twenty thousand men, who had escaped Murat's pursuit; England had made promises that she was in no hurry to fulfil, occupied as she was in seizing the Spanish and Dutch colonies; and Sweden, which was too weak to give her any efficacious support, confined herself to defending Stralsund with some fifteen thousand men. After deducting Michelson's corps, which was engaged in Moldavia, and the troops which could only reach the frontier much later, Russia could only meet us on the Vistula with an army of about twenty thousand men. Lestocq's twenty thousand Prussians, ranged in echelons from Dantzic to Thorn, were keeping watch over the river; Bennigsen had concentrated a corps of sixty thousand men in the neighbourhood of Warsaw; and a third corps, amounting to forty thousand men, and commanded by Buxhœwden, was advancing by forced marches to join Bennigsen.[1] The command of all these united forces was to be given to Kamenski, an old man of eighty, who had neither the energy nor the activity of mind and body that such a task required.

The French army had already marched into Poland, and, as early as the 4th of November, Davoust had occupied Posen. The advanced corps which threatened the Vistula, under the orders of Davoust, Lannes, Augereau, and Murat, may be estimated at ninety thousand men. They were closely followed by another army, nearly equal in number, commanded by Soult,

[1] Approximate valuation, made by comparing the estimates of Plotho, Hœpfner, Danilewski and Robert Wilson. I am indebted to a distinguished military writer, M. Guillaume Rumpf, for a great deal of valuable information on German works and documents relating to the campaigns of 1806-1807, and not translated into French.

Ney, Bernadotte, and Bessières. Mortier's corps was left behind in Mecklenburg, to guard the coast from Hamburg to Stettin. In Silesia, Jérôme's corps was charged, under the direction of Vandamme, to besiege the places which still held out in this province. On our approach, Bennigsen did not feel that he could with his forces alone defend so extensive a line as the Vistula against such a large army; for if the passage of the river was forced at any one point, his scattered troops would be placed in imminent peril. He accordingly abandoned to us, not only Warsaw, but the intrenched camp of Praga, and fell back in the direction of Pultusk, to meet the corps d'armée which Buxhœwden was bringing up. This retrograde movement made us masters of the Vistula. Ney took Thorn from Lestocq's Prussians, and established himself there with Bernadotte's corps and Bessières' cavalry, which formed our left. Soult and Augereau, who composed our centre, crossed the river from Plock to Zakroczim, and our right, comprising the corps of Lannes, Murat, and Davoust, extended along the Bug and Narew, from Sierock to the point at which these two rivers fall into the Vistula.

Such was the respective situation of the two armies towards the 20th of December. Our cantonments extended in echelons from Thorn to Warsaw, a distance of about forty leagues. Lestocq's Prussians had remained upon the Drevenz, near Thorn. The Russian troops, reinforced by Buxhœwden, and placed under the orders of Kamenski, had suspended their retreat, in order to intrench themselves in the angle which is formed, a little north of Warsaw, by the Wkra, the Narew, and the Bug, as they all pour into the Vistula.

The ground, which is naturally swampy on account of the vicinity of these great rivers, had moreover been soaked by rains, and was rendered almost impracticable by the unusual mildness of the season. Napoleon said that 'he had discovered a fifth element in Poland, which was *mud*.' He felt all the inconvenience of a renewal of hostilities under such conditions. He desired and he was able to take up his winter-quarters at Warsaw. It was in order to facilitate this that he had insisted

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on the conclusion of an armistice; and although his offer had been rejected, it only depended on himself to maintain his position. But the close proximity of a Russian army, though it offered little danger, behind the natural intrenchment which penetrated into the very middle of his cantonments, soon appeared to him a sort of permanent insult, which he could not tolerate; and he resolved to give his army no rest till he had either driven back or dispersed the Russians. He even flattered himself that he could beat them at the very opening of the campaign. 'It is possible,' he wrote to Clarke, on the 18th of December, 'that within a week there may be an affair which will finish the campaign.'

In order to attain this end, he ordered a bridge to be constructed over the Narew, below the point where this river joins the Wkra. On the 20th of December, having arrived at Warsaw in the night in order to avoid the ovations of the Poles, he superintended this work in person. When it was finished, all his corps d'armée received orders simultaneously to march against the scattered posts of the Prusso-Russian army. While he is about to cross the Narew, in order to assail the enemy in front with his guard, his reserve and the corps of Davoust and Lannes, his lieutenants Augereau and Soult, marching beyond the Wkra, were to manœuvre on the flank of the Russians in order to turn them; and Ney, supported by Bernadotte, was to drive the Prussians northwards, at the same time that he threatened the line of retreat of their allies. During the night of the 22nd and 23rd of December, the Emperor quitted Warsaw. At nine o'clock in the morning he crossed the Narew, and in the evening of the same day he threw a bridge of boats across the Wkra, between Okunin and Pomichowo, under the fire of the enemy. Deceived by false demonstrations, the Russians failed to prevent the passage. They were immediately attacked in their position at Czarnowo. Night came on, but the combat was not suspended. They fought by the light of the moon. The Russians were driven from their posts, after a vigorous resistance which cost them two thousand men. They retired to Nasielks, where they were beaten afresh on the morrow.

Only one of their divisions had taken part in these two battles, and nevertheless the situation of their army was already compromised. Augereau had crossed the Wkra at Kolozomb after a brilliant fight. He was marching towards Nowemiasto on the flank of the Russians; Soult was advancing parallel from Sochoczyn, and Bernadotte and Ney, who had left Thorn, were making for Biezun and Soldau.

After this sudden irruption, which he had not been able to prevent, old Kamenski, whose head was weakened by age, appeared to have completely lost his reason.[1] His lieutenants, Bennigsen and Buxhœwden, were obliged to provide for the safety of the army. They both agreed to march the bulk of their troops to Pultusk, where they hoped to rally those of their divisions which had remained between the Bug and the Narew. Meanwhile their ardent adversary, believing that their principal retreat would be by Golymin, rushed with his cavalry to Ciechanow, in order to attack them in flank during their march. He sent the corps of Davoust, Augereau, and Murat, to Golymin, and only marched Lannes' corps to Pultusk. To Soult he reserved the honour of striking what he considered the decisive blow of the campaign. He accordingly ordered him to march from Ciechanow to Makow, a town situated in the rear of the Russian army, where he would be able to out to pieces the flying remnants of the enemy and gather the fruits of victory.

This fine plan was in reality only based upon conjectures that were not realized. Napoleon's mistake did not arise from any failing of his genius, nor from any fault of his generals, but from the violence that he did to the nature of things by commencing such extensive operations at such a season and on such ground. Not only did his artillery and equipages stick so fast in the mud that his march was impeded, but even his

[1] Prince Eugène of Würtemberg mentions several signs of this in his *Mémoires*. His evidence is confirmed by that of Robert Wilson, who served in these campaigns as a volunteer in the Russian army, and who wrote an account of them full of very curious and mostly correct information. 'Brief remarks, &c., or a sketch of the campaigns in Poland, 1806–1807.'

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cavalry became almost useless, and it was impossible for him to reconnoitre sufficiently to be thoroughly acquainted with the enemy's movements. As he could make no close observation of facts, he could only act according to suppositions. On the 26th of December, while Napoleon with very superior forces was attacking the village of Golymin, where only one division supported by a few regiments was intrenched, Lannes fell in with the greater part of Bennigsen's corps d'armée at Pultusk. Although he had scarcely twenty-six thousand men, including Gudin's division, to resist about forty thousand, Lannes attacked the enemy's line with his customary intrepidity and made it give way. He directed his principal effort on the Russian left, in the hope of taking Pultusk and the passage of the Narew, but he met with a desperate resistance at all points, and the Russian artillery, very superior to ours, a part of which had been left on the road, made terrible havoc in our ranks. Lannes persisted till evening in furiously attacking Bennigsen, but without success; he did not make him fall back at any one point, and the bloody combat finished without either of the armies having obtained a decisive advantage.[1] At Golymin the issue of the battle had been almost the same, though rather more favourable to our forces. Covered by woods and swamps that were almost unapproachable, Gallitzin's division, with the regiments that supported it, kept Augereau's and Davoust's corps and Murat's cavalry in check for several hours. In the end it was obliged to yield and effect its retreat; but this combat was so indecisive that, from Napoleon's own avowal, the resistance lasted till 11 o'clock at night.[2] The same day, December 26th, fifteen leagues off, Ney attacked Lestocq's Prussians at Soldau, and finally remained master of the town, which was taken and retaken several times; but he paid very dearly for his victory.

[1] In his report, dated from Rozan, December 15–26, Bennigsen plainly claims the victory, and states that no attempt was made to pursue him. He asserts that he only retreated because he had neither forage nor provisions. This is a very exaggerated account.

[2] Forty-seventh bulletin.

Thus, in spite of the excellence of Napoleon's plan, victory had been at least indecisive at one point, and very incomplete at two others. Moreover, two of his corps d'armée had taken no part in the battle. Soult's, which was to cut off the retreat from the Russians at Makow, had been forced to stop at Ciechanow in consequence of the bad state of the roads, and even if he had reached Makow, he would have found a part of Buxhœwden's army ready to resist him there. As for Bernadotte's corps, they had marched in the direction of Biezun without meeting any one. These mistakes, the questionable success, and the want of precision and concert in the execution of the plan, were in truth attributable to the season and the nature of the ground, which rendered our manœuvres so slow and difficult. But Napoleon had been aware of these obstacles from the time of his arrival in Poland. They existed, too, for our enemies as well as for ourselves, but he showed an increasing tendency never to take them into account in his calculations, and it is precisely for this reason that it is important to mark the growth of the propensity. He thought he had explained everything, when he wrote in his bulletin 'that but for the horrible mud, caused by the rains and the thaw, not a single man would have escaped.' He, a captain so skilful in obtaining the greatest possible advantage from ground, who had so often ridiculed fine plans on paper, thought this justification quite plausible and acceptable, as if it had been impossible for him to foresee a temperature that had lasted for more than a month.

But though the victory of this short campaign was far from brilliant, especially when compared with our former triumphs, it was nevertheless ours, since the Russian army were forced to evacuate their positions and abandon us a part of their artillery and baggage, which it was impossible to transport across the bogs. They left eighty guns in our hands. They had lost from ten to twelve thousand men killed or taken prisoners.[1] The losses on our side had been about as great. Napoleon,

[1] Fezensac says *twenty thousand*, but Napoleon, who was not in the habit of underrating the losses of his enemy, says twelve thousand. Forty-seventh bulletin.

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who could not think of pursuing the enemy on ground in which, to use an expression of one of his officers,[1] he saw *his battalions disappear*, resolved to take up his winter-quarters and wait for a milder season. He accordingly distributed his corps d'armée in cantonments situated from ten to fifteen leagues from the Vistula. Though placed near enough to support each other, they were still dispersed over a distance that was unquestionably too extensive, for from Warsaw where Lannes' corps was, to Elbing where Bernadotte was encamped, it is not less than fifty leagues. His other generals occupied the intermediate ground between these two extreme points. Ney was cantoned near Neidenburg, Soult in the neighbourhood of Golymin, Davoust at Pultusk, Augereau close to Zakroczim. Marshal Lefebvre was charged to keep watch over Dantzic with a corps of fifteen thousand men, till he could commence the siege of that place. Another corps invested Graudenz. Napoleon himself remained at Warsaw with his guard. From thence he superintended the thousand arrangements that were necessary for the maintenance of this immense army: the dispatch of provisions, the making of clothes, the supplies, the establishment of large hospitals—a frightful programme of future battles. But these numerous affairs too often amounted to orders that were never executed, because it was impossible that they could be, seeing the disproportion of the enterprise to the precarious resources of the country. Our soldiers, reduced to dig up the provisions which the poor peasant Poles had buried, lived badly. The miserable quality of their food, added to the insalubrity of a damp climate, gave rise to several diseases, from which the chiefs themselves did not escape; Lannes, Murat, and Augereau were seriously attacked; in short, the echo of the complaints of the army reached Paris, and spread so much alarm, that Napoleon felt obliged to dissipate it by contradicting the reports in the *Moniteur*.[2]

The only compensation for so many evils was the fate of the

[1] Jomini.

[2] Napoleon to Fouché, January 18, 1807.

principal towns in Silesia, which succumbed after a more honourable resistance than the other Prussian fortresses had offered. Glogau had capitulated on the 2nd of December; Breslau surrendered to Vandamme on the 8th of January, when the water frozen in the moats placed his weak garrison at the mercy of an assault; Schweidnitz soon after experienced the same fate.

While Napoleon was making arrangements for establishing himself peaceably in his winter-quarters, the Russian army, after having stolen out of his sight by a long and skilful march, was preparing to return and attack him. Driven back upon Ostrolenka, after the battles of Golymin and Pultusk, the Russian generals had succeeded in joining each other near Novgorod. Here a council of war was held, in which Bennigsen warmly insisted on an immediate renewal of hostilities. This general, who, without great military talent, possessed a great deal of daring and perseverance, believed that by indomitable energy they could successfully match the strategical superiority of their terrible adversary. He was a patriot in his own way, and had obtained a great authority over the soldiers. On several occasions in his life, and especially in the famous tragedy which had put an end to the reign and life of Paul I, he had displayed extraordinary strength of character. Without boasting of the well-known part that he had played in that memorable night, he often alluded to it, with the cool and haughty assurance of a man who equally despised bravado and repentance. His firm attitude at Pultusk had pointed him out as the commander of the army, and very soon afterwards he received orders to succeed Kamenski, and execute the plan that he had conceived. Though he did not deceive himself with regard to the difficulties arising from the bad season, he rightly judged them to be less for his soldiers than for ours, who were not accustomed to such a climate, and he instinctively felt that if we were seeking to avoid a battle, there was an advantage for him in offering it. He accordingly resolved to profit by the extensive lengthening out of our cantonments, in order to surprise, if he could, the two corps d'armée which formed their

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extreme end towards Northern Prussia, and in any case to drive them back by disengaging at one stroke the towns of Dantzic and Graudenz. The imprudent dispersion of Ney's corps at Neidenburg, from whence detachments had been sent as far as Königsberg to procure provisions for the famished troops,[1] and the somewhat hazardous situation of Bernadotte at Elbing, offered Bennigsen a well-grounded hope of cutting off and beating these two isolated corps before the rest of the army could come to their assistance. Whatever may be said, in fact, to justify the lengthening out of Napoleon's positions, it is certain that it was too great, and extremely perilous before an army of whose movements and precise situation he was ignorant.

This imprudence, however, was not attended with the unfortunate consequences that might have been feared. So admirable was Napoleon's power of divination in affairs of war, that before he had suspected anything of Bennigsen's plan, he had sent Jomini to Ney's camp, to censure the marshal for his rashness in advancing towards Königsberg, and to recall him to his cantonments at Neidenburg. 'Come back slowly,' wrote Berthier to him, in the Emperor's name, '*it is the first step of a retrograde march that the Emperor is making.*' (January 18, 1807.)[2] Bennigsen, impressed with the necessity of concealing his march, had disappeared behind a vast curtain of impenetrable forests; he had gone far out of his way in the neighbourhood of Lake Spirding, then he had advanced by Arys, Rhein, and Bischoffstein, reckoning on surprising our cantonments that were still confident in their security, especially those of Bernadotte, who was the most exposed after Ney commenced his retrograde movement. Ney had not yet completed this movement when the Russians appeared near Heilsberg (January 22, 1807), and his last detachments were obliged to cut a passage in order to join their corps d'armée. But Bennigsen, who

[1] See Fezensac, Jomini, and Mathieu Dumas, *Précis des événements militaires*, vol. xviii.

[2] Fezensac, *Souvenirs* in the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*, vol. viii., Appendix.

arrived with his troops, harassed by long marches over impracticable ground and in such a rigorous season, found himself unable to effect his operations with the harmony and rapidity that was more than ever necessary. At the moment of reaping the fruit of so skilfully conceived a plan, he allowed it to slip from his hands. Instead of cutting the whole or a part of Ney's corps, he was only able to drive them back upon their line of retreat. Bernadotte, who was quickly warned by his fellow-officer of the danger that threatened him, fell back with all haste in the same direction, and at Mohrungen overthrew the Russian advance-guard, which tried to stop his passage. He lost his baggage, but he was able to effect his retreat upon Strasburg, joining hands with Ney who was at Gilgenburg (January 25th).

Napoleon did not know the whole of these events till the 27th of January. He at once understood their importance, and instead of endeavouring to impede the march of the Russians towards the Lower Vistula, he resolved to do everything to lead them on further and further in Bernadotte's steps, while he himself would move on their rear according to his constant method. He accordingly hastened to break up his cantonments. He led his army on Willemberg, the point from which he intended to attack the extreme left of the Russians, in order to turn them quickly and force them on to the Vistula; or if they perceived his project in time, to drive them back in the opposite direction beyond the Niemen. At Warsaw he left Lannes' corps to fight the two divisions which Bennigsen had sent upon the Narew; then, in order to draw the Russians towards the Vistula, he sent instructions to Bernadotte to retire gradually before them in the direction of Thorn.[1] He did not really flatter himself that he should

[1] According to Robert Wilson, who asserts that Bennigsen gave him the original copy of this order, Napoleon, though he informed Bernadotte of his intention to cut off the Russian army, did not order him to fall back upon Thorn, but 'to resist the enemy with the vigour which he had the right to expect from the military experience of the marshal,' which amounts to the same thing.

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cut off the whole of the Russian army, but he thought he was certain of surprising a corps of 'from fifteen to twenty thousand men,' and he sent to Clarke, to Mortier, and Lefebvre, who were at Berlin, at Stralsund, and Thorn, to hold themselves ready to take advantage of this possible event.[1] The cold having made the ground quite firm, the roads had again become practicable. We could no longer attribute our failures to the mud of Poland. Napoleon had so little doubt of the success of this new campaign, that he announced in all his letters *that he was about to drive the Russians beyond the Niemen.*[2] He even went so far as to predict this result in the proclamation which he addressed to his army on the 30th of January.

'The Russians,' he said, 'are led away by the *Fatality* which constantly misleads the counsels of our enemies. They enter Turkey and declare war on the Porte at the very moment we arrive on their frontiers. They break up their winter-quarters, and come and disturb their conquerors, only to experience fresh defeats. Since it is so, let us quit a repose that would injure our reputation; *let them fly dismayed before our eagles beyond the Niemen!* We shall spend the rest of our winter in the fine provinces of old Prussia, and they will not be able to attribute *their misfortunes* to any other than themselves!'

To speak thus as a man of destiny was no doubt a powerful means of working upon the imagination, but a great general ought to anticipate everything, even the possibility of a reverse. It is better for him not to make engagements that he may not be able to keep, for in case of failure, the effect that he sought to produce will turn against himself; and the more men's minds have been excited by his predictions, the greater will be the depression when they see that they are not fulfilled. As early as the 28th of January, Bennigsen had stopped his march, either because he felt it would be imprudent to advance farther, or because he wished to give some repose to his tired soldiers. On the 30th of January, he began to suspect that the French

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, January 27; to Lefebvre, January 28, 1807.

[2] *Correspondance* from January 27 to February 1, 1807.

intended to operate on his left. The 1st of February he was near Allenstein, when the dispatch was brought him which Napoleon had sent to Bernadotte, and which had been intercepted by the cossacks. Fully enlightened on the danger of his position, he immediately resolved to retire in the direction of Königsberg. At Jonkowo he stopped us for a day, in order to maintain his communications with Lestocq's Prussians, who were still at Osterode in a very hazardous position (February 3rd). He stole away during the night, and the following days he checked us afresh, first at Hott, and then at Landsberg, with remarkable firmness, by means of strong rear-guards which covered the march of his army. At his extreme right the Prussians, separated from him by the Passarge, and closely followed by Ney, still remained very exposed. Forestalled by this marshal at Deppen, where they hoped to cross the river, they had to sacrifice a part of their corps d'armée at Liebstadt, in order to be able to pass it at Spanden.

On the 7th of February, 1807, Bennigsen, still pursued by Napoleon, arrived at Preuss-Eylau. Moved by the complaints of his soldiers, who wanted to fight; tired of keeping upon the defensive, the advantage of which he did not fully understand, and finding the position favourable for his army, he resolved to give us battle there. He was so closely pursued, owing to the rapidity of our movements, that the first shock between the two armies took place that same day. The Russians had established themselves behind Eylau; the town and its approaches were only occupied by their rear-guard, commanded by Barclay de Tolly. Soult drove them out after a bloody combat, in which the town was several times taken and retaken, and our centre was lodged in it for the night.

The next day, the 8th of February, the rising sun showed the position of the two armies. That of the Russians was much nearer to the town than Napoleon had at first supposed. Deceived by a reconnaissance, imperfectly made by Murat, and confirmed in his suppositions by the affairs of the preceding days, the Emperor believed the Russians to be, if

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not in full retreat, at least encamped much farther off. Soult's corps d'armée awoke almost under the fire of their cannon. Very early in the morning Napoleon came up to our line and drew up his army in battle-array. In the centre of our position was a cemetery in which his guard was established, and close by rose the church of Eylau, situated like the town upon a slight eminence. The ground around us, strewed with corpses, everywhere bore traces of the fight of the day before. In front extended the field of battle. A plain, covered with frozen snow, inclined downwards from our positions of Eylau and Rothenen to the opposite extremity, where it rose again after having described some slight undulations. So thick was the ice that covered the ground, that part of the day the soldiers fought upon lakes of which they did not even suspect the existence. The sky was dull and gloomy; the north wind drove before it whirlwinds of snow, and from this sombre background stood out in relief dark masses of the Russian army, drawn up under the heights, from Saussgarten to Schmoditten, three lines deep. They remained there motionless, alternately deployed in order of battle, or closely pressed in columns of attack, behind a rampart of fire formed by four hundred pieces of artillery.

Such was the sight which presented itself to the view of the soldiers on their awakening. The spectacle was the more likely to strike their imagination, because they had not brought into the war any of the enthusiasm which would have softened the lugubriousness of the scene. It was not that their country might be freer, greater, or more prosperous, that they had come to brave death through so many privations, upon this frightful field of battle; it was for the whim of an exacting master, and for a whim of which he gave an account to no one; for what had he not alleged to justify himself for having rejected so advantageous and so honourable a peace? Sometimes Pondichery, sometimes the Poles, sometimes the Turks! In reality—and they well knew it—Napoleon had only been influenced by his desire to rule Europe, and to keep the kingdom which the fate of arms had thrown into his hands. If

these thoughts did not shake their courage, they were at least more calculated to damp their ardour than to give them enthusiasm. When a great incentive is wanting, the common needs of the soldiers must at least be satisfied; their courage then is closely connected with their physical well-being. In spite of their continual success, our troops, deprived of bread and spirits, reduced to the provisions which they dug up in the fields, had endured great privations since the opening of the campaign. The sufferings of the Russians, though cruel, were much less.[1] The inhospitable sky was the sky of their country; they saw in it an auxiliary; in the cold, almost a liberator. Nor were they going as the instruments of a tyrant's whim to carry destruction into a foreign country; ranged along their frontiers to repel a hostile approach, they could at least believe that they were fighting for their hearths.

It is difficult to estimate even approximately the effective of the two armies which were then on the point of cutting each other to pieces on the frozen plains of Eylau, so much has national pride on both sides prevented any light being thrown on the subject. Napoleon had all his army with him except Lannes' corps, which was left at Warsaw, Bernadotte's corps, which had remained behind, and Ney's corps, which was engaged a little distance off with Lestocq's Prussians, whom he neutralized. There remained, therefore, the corps of Davoust, Augereau, and Soult, and Murat's guard and cavalry. These different corps could not form less than seventy thousand men. Historians who reckon his army at less than this number, are very embarrassed to explain how, after having swept up three hundred and thirty thousand men in Germany, he could only bring fifty-four thousand on the field of battle. They solve the difficulty by asserting that he left behind him sixty thousand stragglers, quite forgetting that this is casting a far graver reflection on Napoleon than granting him a few thousand more men upon the field of Eylau. On the other hand, in this

[1] The evidence of Fezensac, who was made prisoner by the Russians, and who was therefore able to make the comparison *de visu*, is conclusive on this point.

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estimate of sixty thousand stragglers in the French army, there is no allowance made for a single one in the Russian army, which had just made infinitely longer and more painful marches than ours—a magnificent encomium, although it is intended to detract from their merit, but one that must appear exaggerated when we reflect that there were a great many deserters among the Poles. Putting aside the improbable estimates that were drawn up later under the influence of national and military susceptibilities, we may rely on the opinion of an excellent judge, himself a witness and actor in these events—General Jomini—who reckons that the forces were equal on both sides, except with regard to the artillery, in which the Russians were superior in numbers, and the French in precision.

Napoleon confronted the deep masses of the Russian army with a much thinner but more extended line, which rendered his fire more destructive. He had entrenched a part of Soult's corps in the town of Eylau, another to the left of the town; in the centre, in the cemetery and around it, was his guard, on ground strewed with the dead of the day before; at the right, in the village of Rothenen, another of Soult's divisions, supported by Augereau's corps; a little behind, in the intervals left between these positions, was stationed Murat's cavalry. With regard to Davoust's corps, sent off the day before in the direction of Domnau, and recalled in all haste, it was to enter the field a little later, debouching at the extreme left of the Russians, and almost in their rear. If Davoust's attack succeeded, their left would be driven into their centre, and the whole army thrown back in the direction of Königsberg, where they would find their march barred by Ney's corps.

A frightful cannonade had already commenced between the moving ramparts of artillery which covered the front of the two armies. Motionless under the deadly fire which shot down whole files, they both waited with impassibility for the moment of coming to close quarters. For several hours each sought to break through the ranks of the enemy with the cannon, as if they were storming a fortress, but the breaches made by the artillery were immediately closed up. The Russians, accustomed

to Napoleon's rapid and formidable offensive warfare, were dismayed at this novel attitude, and seemed to dread one of those terrible surprises that were so familiar with him. However, more exposed than ourselves by their open situation to the havoc of the artillery, they were the first to give way. They came to manœuvre on our left, as if they would outflank it, but their attention was very soon drawn to another side. Sharp firing was heard on their flanks on the side of Serpallen; it was Davoust, who had arrived on the field of battle, and was driving before him the two divisions that had resisted him. In Napoleon's plan, his appearance was to form the decisive event of the day, in the same way as Ney, who had been recalled from Kreutzberg a little later, was to complete the issue of the battle.

It was then about one o'clock, and the sky, instead of clearing, had become still more gloomy. In order to derive the full advantage from his lieutenant's powerful diversion, and to hinder the Russians from attacking his isolated corps with all their forces, Napoleon at length decided upon taking up the offensive. He pushed Saint-Hilaire's division to his extreme right to join hands with Davoust, and he sent Augereau's corps d'armée to attack the Russian centre. While Saint-Hilaire drew out the enemy's left towards Serpallen, Augereau, sword in hand, though ill for several days, led Desjardin's and Heudelet's divisions through a regular hurricane of shot and ball. Before they could reach the enemy, they were enveloped in a whirlwind of snow, which, driving against the soldiers' faces, blinded and paralysed them, rendering their arms useless and their march confused and uncertain. The Russians, who turned their backs to the wind, and who had not moved from their positions, were, on the contrary, able to calculate their distance. They crushed with the fire of their artillery these hesitating masses, that seemed to have become equally incapable of drawing back or marching forward. In a few minutes, half of Augereau's corps was placed *hors de combat*, his generals and principal officers killed or wounded, and himself injured in the head. Then the Russian cavalry rushed forward, pursuing and

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cutting to pieces our fugitive soldiers; it was no longer a defeat, but complete destruction. This corps d'armée was disbanded after the battle, for fear the small number of survivors should retain too vivid a recollection of that fatal day.

It was a most critical moment. The Russian squadrons charged our soldiers up to the approaches of the cemetery in which Napoleon was stationed. Intrenched in this enclosure, and exposed to a shower of shot and ball, the guard defended with difficulty this central point, which was the key of our positions. Augereau, brought bleeding out of this fearful conflict, bitterly complained of the way in which he had been abandoned. The sky had cleared, and allowed the whole extent of the disaster to be seen. Napoleon saw that a great effort was necessary to turn the scale in our favour. By his orders Murat formed the eighty squadrons of our cavalry into a single legion; with this irresistible mass he made a desperate charge on the Russian centre. He first brought back the enemy's cavalry; he then broke the first line of infantry, crossed it, and cut his way through the second; but when he reached the third he made several charges without succeeding in breaking through it. His ardour failed before the firmness of these troops, and he had to turn back after a desperate struggle. But the lines, half overthrown by this frightful avalanche of men and horses, had held their positions, and had formed again behind him. He was forced to break through them afresh, in order to open a passage to our positions.

This magnificent irruption upon the centre of the Russians had resulted in no decisive issue; but meanwhile, one of their columns, which under cover of the great disorder had ventured as far as Eylau, was captured almost entire, and Davoust had achieved his movement. Supported by Saint-Hilaire's division, he had driven the Russian left from Serpallen to Saussgarten, and afterwards as far back as the village of Kuschitten. But there he was stopped short by the detachments which Bennigsen sent one after another against him. In spite of the brilliant success of this attack the battle was still uncertain, for our centre was exhausted, and only feebly sustained

Davoust's movement. In all probability, however, this flank attack would have ended by gravely imperilling Bennigsen's situation, had not an unforeseen event given the Russians the advantage. Lestocq, escaping from Ney's pursuit with a portion of his corps d'armée, while the marshal still in ignorance of what had taken place at Eylau was driving his enemy before him in the direction of Königsberg, just then made his appearance at Althoff on the extreme Russian right. After having passed without stopping behind Bennigsen's army as far as his extreme left, he deployed his eight thousand men before Davoust's corps, which was forced to fall back in its turn. This unexpected incident changed in a few moments the face of things. Thanks to the vigorous manner in which Lestocq had resumed the offensive, the Russians recovered almost all the ground that they had lost on this side. Instead of defending themselves, they attacked our troops, who fell back. Perhaps a general effort from the whole of their line might have definitely given them the victory, perhaps we might have experienced another Pultowa, or learned to know even then something of the disasters of a retreat from Russia, had not Ney, who after several hours lost in useless skirmishes had been joined and warned by his aide-de-camp Fezensac, at length appeared by the side of Schmoditten, too late to really change the issue of this bloody and undecided battle, but early enough at least to prevent the scales turning in favour of our adversaries.

Night had come on, but no darkness was thick enough to conceal the horror of this field of carnage, on which lay nearly forty thousand men, wounded, dying, or dead. 'What a massacre, and without any issue!' exclaimed Marshal Ney the following day, as he turned his eyes from the heaps of corpses shrouded in their winding-sheets of snow. 'What a massacre, and *for no cause!*' he might still more rightly have said. Our soldiers had not fought for any interest or for any principle. Without love and without hatred, they were dying for a whim, like the gladiators of the circus. At least half the victims in this slaughter had fallen from our ranks;

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for if the cannonade at the commencement of the action had been more sanguinary for the Russians than for ourselves, our attacks had several times been repulsed, and nothing in war involves greater loss than an attack that fails. For a general like Napoleon, and especially at such a distance from our basis of operations, an uncertain battle was a failure if not a defeat; and what increased its gravity was Napoleon's engagement, that was still present to all minds, to drive the Russians '*beyond the Niemen.*' Now, not only had the Russians continued their retreat without Napoleon thinking of molesting them; but they were marching towards Königsberg, where there was no other issue than the sea, as if to defy us to force them into it. On the other hand, Napoleon had remained master of the field of battle; and although he was incapable of attempting anything further, he was not a man not to take advantage of this circumstance to transform the check into victory. His army had, in reality, suffered so fearfully that it would have been impossible for him to keep his positions any longer before a resolute enemy. Bennigsen's lieutenants, Generals Knorring and Tolstoï, entreated their commander to renew the fight; but he had sustained enormous losses, and his soldiers were dying of hunger. Napoleon's inflexible will prevailed.

Such is the value of tenacity in war, that it is not improbable that the obstinate and indomitable attitude of a Wellington would have constrained him almost immediately to retreat. This is so true that even when the Russians retreated voluntarily, the principal officers of the army thought we ought to retrogade beyond the Vistula, and Napoleon himself was inclined to this opinion. The day after the battle, writing to General Duroc, one of the few men who had inspired him with confidence, thanks to his reserved and taciturn character, he said: 'There was a very bloody battle yesterday at Eylau. The field of battle remained in our hands, *but if a great many men were killed on both sides, the situation renders my loss the more sensible.* . . . It is possible that, in order to get quiet winter-quarters, I shall remove to the left bank of the

Vistula.'[1] This is very different to what Berthier wrote the day before to Josephine in a letter that was intercepted: '*To-morrow Königsberg will have the honour of receiving the Emperor!*' To acknowledge that the situation rendered his loss heavier, was to recognise that his foolish policy had even clouded his military views, which in general were so clear and so profound; for it was this alone which had placed him in a situation in which each blow he received counted double, and in which he could not utilise a fifth of his forces. But he felt, with his lofty genius and his pride, how unfortunate would be the moral effect of a retreat upon the Vistula; and not only did he reject this idea as soon as Bennigsen's inaction showed him the possibility of escaping from so humiliating an extremity, but he began to speak of victory with that assurance which for so long deluded even the soldiers themselves. A few hours after having dictated this letter to Duroc, he wrote to Cambacérès to publish in the *Moniteur* 'that the Russian army *had been completely put to rout*, that they had lost from ten to twelve thousand prisoners, and fourteen thousand in dead or wounded.' With regard to ourselves, he had only fifteen hundred killed and four thousand wounded.[2] In his bulletin it would almost have seemed an insult to the sufferings of the soldiers to have reckoned their losses so low; he accordingly owned to one thousand nine hundred dead, and five thousand seven hundred wounded,—a number, however, which fell far short of the truth.[3] Soon after, the mournful impressions of the first moment having been dispelled, he did not fear to estimate the losses of the Russians at forty thousand men and fifteen or sixteen generals; then when he reached Landsberg, and had no longer before his eyes the field of battle which was witness to the destruction of a whole corps d'armée, he did not hesitate to write in his sixty-first bulletin '*that it was fortunate for Königsberg that it had not entered into the calculations of the French general to force the Russian army into this*

[1] Napoleon to Duroc, February 9, 1807.
[2] To Cambacérès, the same day.
[3] Fifth-eighth bulletin.

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position!' A puerile and foolish bravado, for it inevitably suggested to all minds a question to which there could be but one reply. The most ignorant soldier was capable of understanding that if it had not entered into Bonaparte's calculations to deal so extraordinary and so decisive a blow, it was solely because he had recognised its impossibility.

In order to give an idea of the cynical impudence which characterized this man, and of the slight dependence that can be placed on his military reports, I will confine myself to quoting the assertions, contained in two letters written *the same day*, one to Cambacérès, the other to Daru, and relating to *the same fact*, that is to say, the number of our wounded in the battle of Eylau. 'My cousin,' he wrote to Cambacérès, 'now that all the reports are made up, it appears that the losses we experienced in the battle of Eylau were rather exaggerated than underrated in this bulletin. *They amount to three thousand wounded and fifteen hundred dead.*' To Daru he wrote: 'Monsieur Daru, according to your report of the 8th of March, the number of wounded who have entered the hospitals of Thorn is only four thousand. *That is very few, there must be more; I had reckoned that there were from seven to eight thousand wounded.*'[1] He was the more likely to have reckoned on this number from the reports of his officers, which calculated the wounded at twelve thousand. How could he not know that the hospitals of Thorn could not possibly contain all these poor wretches? that a great number of them had either been dispersed with the stragglers in the neighbouring localities, or had been abandoned on account of the difficulty of transport? 'I was ordered to follow General Colbert, who covered the retreat,' wrote Fezensac; 'we were therefore the last to leave. The road was filled with carriages and waggons of every description, which had sunk into the snow. A great many wounded had taken refuge in these vehicles, and entreated us in vain not to abandon them. . . . . The general sent an officer to recommend the unfortunate beings to the kindness of the burgo-

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès and to Daru, March 11, 1807.

master of Eylau, and to the commander of the Russian advance guard, whose cossacks already occupied the town.'[1] Compared with these shameful dissemblings, the report in which Bennigsen boldly claimed the victory, while he admitted a total loss of twelve thousand killed, may pass for a model of truthfulness.[2] Moreover, what better than anything else shows the real state of our affairs after the battle of Eylau, is the complete change which immediately took place in Napoleon's policy towards the same King of Prussia, whom he had been treating with so much harshness and contempt. The day before, he derisively put him off to the epoch of the general peace, seemed to doubt whether he would ever re-establish him upon his throne, and, at all events, openly announced his intention of never restoring to him his Polish provinces. How much his feelings had softened after the battle! 'My brother,' he wrote to him, on the 13th of February, 'I send to your Majesty General Bertrand, who has my entire confidence. He will say things which will I trust be agreeable; may your Majesty believe that this *is the finest moment of my life!* I flatter myself that it will be the commencement of a lasting friendship between us.'

What Bertrand was charged to offer to King Frederick William was the restitution of the Prussian provinces as far as the Elbe. These were the conditions which Napoleon had so obstinately refused a few months before. It was this separate peace which he had declared was impossible. Bertrand's instructions prescribed to him to represent to the King of Prussia that his alliance with Russia was only a vassalage disguised; that the sufferings of his people did not permit him to wait for the consent of England; 'that Napoleon wished alone to have the

[1] *Souvenirs Militaires* de Fezensac. Another eye-witness, R. Wilson, fully confirms the truth of this account. The Russians seized two hundred of these carriages filled with our wounded. All the neighbouring villages were crowded with our sick.—'A Sketch of the Campaign,' &c.

[2] 'I lay at the feet of your Majesty,' he wrote to Alexander, 'twelve flags taken from the enemy.' These flags were carried by Colonel Beckindorff to St. Petersburg, where every one could see them. This did not, however, prevent Napoleon from writing in his fifty-ninth bulletin, 'that only a single regiment had lost its eagle by an accident of war.'

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glory of reorganizing the Prussian nation, whose power was necessary to the whole of Europe.' It was somewhat late to recognise this truth, but the battle of Eylau had opened his eyes. It had revealed many other things to him besides. In reconciling himself with Prussia, what was he going to do with the unfortunate Poles whom he had compromised, and whom he still continued to enlist under his standard? 'General Bertrand,' continued Napoleon, '*will let it be understood that since the Emperor has learned to know Poland*, HE NO LONGER ATTACHES ANY IMPORTANCE TO IT.'[1] The perfect indifference that Napoleon showed to his natural allies was scarcely calculated to induce the King of Prussia to accept this *eternal friendship* which Bertrand had just proposed to him; he was, besides, too closely bound to Russia to make peace without her; he accordingly insisted on a Congress, in which the conditions of a European peace should be discussed. But Napoleon, formerly so ardent for this idea, now only saw its inconvenience. He reminded the King of Prussia 'that the Congress of Westphalia had lasted eighteen months,' and persisted in requiring a separate treaty, declaring, however, that he was ready to accept an arrangement with Russia and England, *if they really wished it*, and that this was what he desired. 'I should be horrified at myself,' he added, 'to be the cause of so much bloodshed, but if England believes that this effusion of blood is useful to her projects and her monopoly, what am I to do?'[2]

This bad argument but thinly disguised his real thought. Three months before, the miserable condition to which he had reduced Prussia offered him a sure means of intimidating and influencing the coalesced powers. Then he had demanded a general congress; now, on the contrary, the situation of these powers had so much improved that they could act efficiently in favour of their ally. That was why he would no longer treat except with King Frederick William alone. The contradiction was therefore only apparent, and this ostentatious generosity was only a snare.

[1] Instructions for General Bertrand, February 13, 1807.
[2] Napoleon to the King of Prussia, February 26, 1807.

CHAPTER II.

SHAM NEGOTIATIONS.—THE INACTION AT OSTERODE AND AT FINKENSTEIN. (MARCH—MAY 1807.)

THUS failed an attempt that was neither sincere nor honourable, and which had only been made in the hope of dividing our adversaries. There was a want of dignity, as well as of sincerity and tact, in so openly flattering, the day after a reverse, those whom he had previously treated with such coarse contempt.

Napoleon, after having vigorously driven in the enemy's outposts in order to obtain quiet winter-quarters, removed his head-quarters to Osterode, on the frontiers of Prussia. He rested on Thorn, as two months before he had rested on Warsaw. He established his army behind the Passarge and the Alle. His extreme left was at Braunsberg, his centre extended from Mohrungen to Allenstein, his right from Gilgenburg to Willenberg. These positions, though more concentrated than the former ones, were neither very strong nor very secure; they were much too far from our centres of supplies, which exposed the troops during the remainder of the winter to the most cruel privations. Napoleon has himself given in his correspondence a fearful picture of the state of destitution to which the soldiers were several times reduced. They were without bread, without brandy, without shelter, without shoes, in the midst of snow and ice. We are, however, compelled to admit that his admirable military instinct did not

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fail him, and that after having committed the fault of transporting the war into so inhospitable a country, he repaired it by resolutely bearing up against these first trials, instead of giving way and acknowledging himself vanquished. His indomitable attitude daunted his enemy, and prevented him from again disturbing our cantonments; it daunted Austria still more, whose intervention at this moment would have been all powerful, and who lost the opportunity. A retrograde movement, on the contrary, would have emboldened our enemies throughout Europe; it would have been the signal perhaps for a calamitous disorder. His bold and skilful resolution is the most striking criticism on Bennigsen's line of conduct. This general had, it is true, sustained great losses, but his offensive warfare in the depth of winter had hitherto succeeded too well for him to abandon it, and the more Napoleon showed a desire to keep quiet till the fine weather, the less ought Bennigsen to have resigned himself to the inaction to which he was condemned for the remainder of the winter.

Several victories won upon other points by our soldiers and our allies gradually weakened the disastrous impression of Eylau. Savary, who was charged with the command of Lannes' corps while that general was ill, cleared the approaches of the Narew, which were so necessary to our occupation of Warsaw, and beat the Russians at Ostrolenka. In the course of February, Lefebvre invested Dantzic; Mortier occupied the neighbourhood of Stralsund, which he could not invest for want of ammunition; our army of Silesia hurried on the sieges of Neisse and Glatz; and our allies, the Turks, stood their ground on the Danube against Michelson, who was obliged to send detachments on the Bug, to assist Bennigsen.

At Constantinople the Sultan Selim, marvellously aided by Sebastiani, won a great diplomatic and military victory over the Anglo-Russian coalition. After the declaration of war from Russia and the departure of her ambassador Italinski, Selim had had to listen to the remonstrances and intimidations of England. He had yielded to them for an instant, but had

very soon repented of his weakness. England was the more anxious to put an end to the Sultan's hesitation, because she had hitherto only given Russia a very feeble support, and she feared lest that power should appropriate a part of the Turkish provinces at the conclusion of a successful war. Admiral Duckworth's fleet was recalled from the coast of Spain to the Dardanelles, to give weight to the remonstrances of the British cabinet. Their minister, Mr. Arbuthnot, presented an imperious ultimatum to the Porte. He summoned the Sultan to dismiss Sebastiani, and to pronounce in favour of the Anglo-Russian alliance (February 25th). On Selim's refusal, Arbuthnot embarked with his fellow-countrymen to join the fleet. War was immediately declared with England. Duckworth intrepidly entered the straits with his weak squadron under the cannon of the palaces of the Dardanelles. He sustained their badly directed fire without injury, burned and destroyed the vessels that he met on his passage, and came to anchor off Prince's Island, a few miles from the seraglio (February 21st). Terror reigned in Constantinople, where no measure of defence had been taken. Duckworth insisted on the immediate acceptance of the ultimatum, the conditions of which were made still harder by fresh requirements. In this first moment of consternation, a single ball fired on the seraglio would have obtained the immediate submission of the Sultan and his capital, but the English admiral was deterred by scruples of humanity. He consented to negotiate, and lost all the fruit of his successful boldness. Sebastiani, who displayed a great deal of decision, coolness, and skill in this difficult situation, went to the Sultan and raised his courage. He showed him the possibility of gaining time, and of organizing the defence. He made the English retire to some distance, and amused them for several days with pretended negotiations. In the meantime he erected batteries along the shore, armed the gunboats, drew up the old ships so that their broadsides might bear on the coast, and had the Turkish marines exercised by French officers whom Napoleon had sent him.

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At last Duckworth perceived (February 26) that he had been tricked. Instead of being able to intimidate, he found himself threatened in his turn. He was obliged again to enter the narrow strait through which he had come, under the fire of an artillery that had become formidable. He reappeared before Constantinople, which henceforth laughed at his attacks. To complete his misfortunes, contrary winds hindered him from taking up a position before the town to commence offensive operations. Each day increased his peril. He was compelled to leave, and he once more confronted the batteries of the Dardanelles, whose enormous guns did his vessels great damage (March 3).[1]

Selim's unexpected energy, and the success of his resistance to the injunctions of the British cabinet, gave Napoleon great joy, by proving the power of a diversion on the efficaciousness of which he had never much reckoned. The news did not reach him till the beginning of April, 1807. He resolved to render his alliance with Selim still closer, and at the same time to strengthen it by a firm union with Persia, from which he also hoped to derive great advantage. He publicly announced in the *Moniteur* that the Russians had offered peace to Persia, and that Fethali Shah had rejected the proposition, exclaiming, '*that so long as the great emperor, his friend, was at war with the Russians, they need not hope for either peace or truce!*'[2] He offered Selim arms, ammunition, soldiers, or help of any kind. 'You have shown yourself,' he wrote to him, April 3rd, 'the worthy descendant of Selim and of Soliman. You have asked me for a few officers, I send them to you. . . . . Generals, officers, soldiers, arms of every kind, even money, I place at your disposal. You have only to ask; ask plainly, and whatever you ask for shall be sent immediately. Make friends with the Shah of Persia, who is also the enemy of the Russians.

[1] Duckworth's reports, addressed to Admiral Collingwood, from February 21 to March 3, 1807 ('Annual Register for the Year 1807, Appendix to the Chronicle.') Letter from Sebastiani to Marmont, March 4, 1807.

[2] *Moniteur*, April 2, 1807.

Persuade him to remain firm, and vigorously to attack the common enemy.' He wrote in the same manner to the Shah, in order to stir him to attack both the English and the Russians;[1] and began to give his attention at once to the organising of General Gardane's mission, who did not, however, start till the following month of May. The letter to Selim concluded thus: '*Peace has been proposed to me, I have been offered all the advantage that I could desire;* but I should have had to ratify the state of things established between the Porte and Russia by the treaty of Sistowa, and *I refused.* I replied that it was necessary that absolute independence should be insured to the Porte.'

This postscript contained as many lies as it did words. If Napoleon attached so much importance to the alliance of Turkey and Persia, if he showed so much consideration and affection for these two sovereigns, who must have been rather astonished at so sudden an attachment, it was simply because his successive advances to Prussia and Austria had been received with mistrust and coldness. The same may be said of the exaggerated expressions of sympathy for the Swedish nation to which he gave utterance about this time, when Mortier, after having beaten the Swedes at Passewalk, concluded a truce with them which for a time separated them from the coalition. 'The Emperor,' said Napoleon, in his seventy-second bulletin, 'has always been deeply grieved to make war on a brave and generous nation, who *by their history and geographical position are the friends of France.* . . . . The Emperor's instructions have always been to treat the Swedes as friends with whom we have quarrelled, but with whom the force of things cannot fail to reconcile us. The dearest interests of the two peoples demand it. *If they injured us, they would regret it another day, and we wish to repair the evil which we have done to them.*' Nothing can be more just than these considerations; but why in his mouth were they only a

[1] Napoleon to Selim, April 3, 1807; to the Shah of Persia, the same day.

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feint, suggested by a temporary embarrassment, instead of being the sincere and lasting expression of his policy? Sweden, Turkey, Persia, and Poland were in reality the only allies that he could henceforward hope to have; but these nations were soon to learn to their cost what value he set even upon an alliance based upon that community of interests, traditions, and sympathy, upon which he laid so much stress. When he wrote these declarations which cost him so little, he had already for some time been turning over in his mind the chances of a reconciliation either with Russia or Austria,—a reconciliation which would inevitably involve the abandonment or sacrifice of these boasted alliances.

After his awkward and unsuccessful attempt to win over the King of Prussia the day after the battle of Eylau, Napoleon again turned towards Austria. Besides being alarmed at his own isolation, he was seriously disquieted by the ill-concealed armaments of this power, who alleged with a great deal of reason the necessity of placing herself in a position to make neutrality respected. He very rightly felt that, after all the wrong he had done to Austria, it required very little to change the distrustful attitude of the cabinet of Vienna into one of open hostility. He therefore resolved to gain her friendship at any price. 'What does the house of Austria want?' he wrote to Talleyrand on the 3rd of March. 'If they wish to treat, in order to guarantee the integrity of Turkey, I will consent. If they wish for a treaty, *by which, if Russia acquired an increase of territory in Turkey, the two powers would make common cause to obtain an equivalent*, that can also be arranged.' After having so plainly shown the value he set upon the interests of his good friend Selim, and of that *integrity* which recurred in all his manifestoes, he bid Talleyrand again offer a portion of Silesia. In short, he was to let Napoleon know 'what was requisite to secure the friendship of Austria?' But even supposing that Austria knew nothing of the propositions of a totally different character which Napoleon had just made to the King of Prussia, which is not very probable, what confidence could she have in such abrupt proposals, or in a man who changed his

tone so frequently and so completely and who sacrificed his most faithful friends with such shameless ease; who displayed, in a word, so much gentleness and affability after so much arrogance?

M. de Vincent, to whom Talleyrand made these unexpected overtures, expressed more surprise than eagerness. He replied that his court had no desire to appropriate the spoils of Turkey, or to enrich herself at the expense of her neighbours; she only asked for the security of her own possessions. Napoleon returned to the charge. 'M. de Vincent,' he wrote to Talleyrand, the 9th of March, 'must tell us what they want, for all this must end in an alliance between France and Austria, or between France and Russia. Austria has no grounds for her alarm, for the Emperor's plan is this: to restore to the King of Prussia his throne and his states; and to maintain the integrity of the Porte.' Since Austria does not wish for the division of Turkey, he invoked anew the great principle of integrity. With regard to Poland, he immediately adds, '*the explanation is contained in the first part of the sentence;*' that is to say, that the stipulation of restoring to the King of Prussia his states puts Poland out of the question. Thus he held his soldiers, the Poles, as cheap as his friends the Turks. He offered to sacrifice them to Austria, as he had already offered to sacrifice them to Prussia. Did he at least cease during this time to compromise them and to urge them forward? No, he never lavished their blood and their resources more profusely. Two days before, on the 6th of March, he wrote to Zajonchek to hurry him to complete the organization of his corps d'armée, which was to be raised to *twenty-five thousand men;* he begged him to enrol under his standard all the nobility on the right bank of the Vistula; and he wrote to Talleyrand the same day that he was going to stir up an insurrection in Volhynia and Podolia! But perhaps he had to complain of their slowness and their want of energy? Not the least. He admitted that he had not, in the plainest terms: 'Endeavour,' he wrote to Talleyrand at this very time, 'to persuade Gouvion to have a little more patience with the

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Poles. *They appear to me to be rendering as much service as circumstances will permit.*'[1] We see by this conduct whether the enlightened Poles were right or wrong in not trusting Napoleon.

The Austrian cabinet received these fresh advances very coldly, and maintained an impenetrable reserve. Napoleon was the last man to bear this enigmatical attitude in an adversary for any length of time. He became irritable and impatient, and very soon he threatened Austria. He no longer attempted to seduce her, he made preparations for giving her the choice between an alliance or war. In order to intimidate more surely, he determined to deal an extraordinary blow. It was scarcely four months since he had asked for the conscription of the eighty thousand men, who ought not to have been drawn till a year later: he was now by a fresh abuse of power going to call in March, 1807, for the eighty thousand conscripts of 1808; he was going to make this terrible avowal to France, that he required two conscriptions in four months; that with all his genius, an army of five hundred and forty thousand men was not sufficient to protect the national honour! And even then he had not owned all, for he intended in the month of September to draw the conscripts of 1809! 'I am going to arm eighty thousand men,' he wrote to Talleyrand, the 30th of March; 'in the month of September I shall arm eighty thousand more.' At the same time, while by a fresh violation of the laws which he had himself made, he withdrew the vote of this iniquitous measure from the Legislative Body, to impose it on his complaisant senators, he impudently gave as his motive 'that England had just made a levy of two hundred thousand men.'[2]

He warned his friends, Cambacérès and Lacuée, that objections were useless, that he knew them beforehand, that he should listen to no remonstrance, nor suffer any delay; that such was his unchangeable will. Talleyrand received orders to

[1] Napoleon to General Zajonchek, March 6, 1807; to Talleyrand, the same date.

[2] Message to the Senate.

inform the Court of Vienna that our levies were made in consequence of her own armaments and her own equivocal policy; 'that he wanted her reply to our overtures, to give a half turn to the right to our army of Brittany and Normandy . . . . . that she would be very foolish to draw the theatre of war upon her own territory, ... that he was ready to have his army passed in review by an Austrian officer, who would thus see with his own eyes how many troops France could send into Bavaria before a month was out. . . . . In short, Austria ought to accept his overtures of peace; at all events, she must no longer give him cause for anxiety, nor make use of any more threats.'

Such insolent provocation, coming immediately after such flattering overtures, was enough to exasperate the most patient statesmen; and perhaps Austria, even weak as she then was, would not have tolerated such language, had it reached her without being softened. But by a singular coincidence, at the very moment that Napoleon was sending her this foolish challenge, she was offering him her mediation with the coalesced powers. Napoleon wrote his letter on the 19th of March, and on the following day, the 20th, he received one from Talleyrand, informing him of the offer of the Austrian cabinet. He was bitterly disappointed, for this benevolent proposition caused his threats to fall to the ground by depriving him of the pretext for them, and gave Austria the advantage of the delay. In spite of his hypocritical declarations in favour of peace, he had no longer any desire to make it, since the large reinforcements had filled up the gaps in his army, and the aim of his steps with the different powers had been to gain an additional ally, and not to conclude a peace. The Court of Vienna volunteered him her kind services; what he wished to obtain was the assistance of her armies. He felt, however, all the gravity of the incident, and did not conceal from himself that the Austrian intervention might in a very short time end in war. His embarrassment betrayed itself in the incessant changes in his language and conduct. At first he ordered Talleyrand to maintain an ambiguous attitude, not to reply either Yes or No, to require Austria

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to cease arming.[1] A few days later, he urged him to settle with Austria; he declared himself ready to accept the mediation, and even asked to have a suspension of arms for three or six months added to it.[2] On the 16th of April he officially accepted the mediation, still insisting on the armistice,[3] but he very soon altered his mind. Before any armistice, he wanted to name Dantzic and Graudenz, which towns were closely surrounded by his soldiers. He blamed Talleyrand for agreeing to the *status præsens* as basis; he enjoined him to make no engagement, to feign ignorance, to delay affairs; he regarded the intervention of Austria as a *misfortune*; everything, therefore, 'even the place in which the Congress should be held, must be made ground for discussion.'[4]

Throughout this negotiation, of which it was so easy to foresee the issue, his absolute want of principle and of all rule of conduct, and the incredible changes in his ideas, which had no other compass to steer by than the interest of the moment, considered from the most selfish and most ephemeral point of view, degenerated into shortsightedness and folly. It did not require more to cause the failure of a project which had only been an expedient for Austria, and which the other powers had never for an instant regarded as serious. They accepted the mediation of Austria in principle, but they confined themselves to vague declarations, and there was nothing serious or definite in their steps, beyond the Convention of Bartenstein (April 26), which drew the alliance between Frederick William and Alexander still closer. The two sovereigns joined together afresh for the common defence, and for the reconstruction of Europe. They strictly engaged *not to make any conquest on their own account during the whole time of the war.* (Art. 13.) This engagement, which was certainly disinterested, though perhaps somewhat premature, shows to what illusions the indecisive battle of Eylau had given rise in their minds.

During the interchange of these pacific demonstrations, which

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, March 20.
[2] To the same, March 26.
[3] To the same, April 16.
[4] To the same, April 23.

resembled the skilful counter-marches and feigned movements by which generals endeavour to discover the weak side of an adversary, Napoleon, who had taken up his residence first at Osterode, then at the château of Finkenstein (April 1st), was actively employed in raising the courage of his soldiers, in insuring his supplies, which had at first been so deficient, in hastening the arrival of his reinforcements, and in the organization of his conscripts. On the 4th of April, Cambacérès and Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély presented themselves in his name before the dismayed Senate, to obtain their leave to draw the conscripts of 1808. Cambacérès swore by all that was sacred that these young men would only be employed at home. He dwelt upon the '*paternal kindness*' of his Majesty, who was unwilling that these fresh conscripts should affront the hardships of war, before they had been by degrees familiarized with them. A report of Berthier's was then read, which stated 'that his Majesty's army had never been so large, so well trained, or better organized; but that it was necessary to make up the losses sustained in battle and by sickness;' concise and terrible language, which well expressed the anticipated destruction of this immense annual levy. Regnault was the last to speak. He felt for the Emperor, who had done everything to have peace, 'and whose heart bled while he demanded this fresh conscription.' He felt for the conscripts too. 'Strictly speaking,' he said, 'they will only be national guards, corps *in which children, obeying the voice of nature*, will replace their fathers under the departmental eagles. . . . . It costs his Majesty dear, witness the bulletin from Eylau which breathes regret rather than joy at the victory!'[1]

This pathetic appeal moved the senators, who had too much feeling to refuse their vote to this Tibullus of conscription. Conscription and proscription were already, to use an expression of a contemporary,[2] the first word and the last of the imperial régime. Napoleon had none of the sentimentality that

[1] *Moniteur*, April 8, 1807.

[2] Daunou: *Essai sur les garanties.*

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Regnault ascribed to him. His 'paternal kindness' consisted in re-establishing by inexorable severity the discipline which had lately been greatly relaxed. 'I have been sorry to see,' he wrote to Soult, 'that a peasant had come from Elditten to Liebstadt. Shall we never know how to maintain order? Not even a hare ought to cross the line. 'Shoot the first person that passes, be he innocent or guilty.'[1] It is by such means, it appears, that what it is customary to call *great things* in war are done. He took advantage of the leisure which Bennigsen left him, to push forward the sieges of those places which still held out, like Neisse and Glatz in Silesia, and Graudenz and Colberg in Upper Prussia. He was particularly anxious to take Dantzic, an extremely difficult undertaking, of which he wished to give the honour to Lefebvre, but which was in reality directed by Chasseloup and Lariboisière, two eminent engineers. Dantzic was invested the 8th of March, and from that day a regular siege was carried on by a corps of twenty thousand men, composed partly of auxiliary troops. This period of comparative tranquillity also gave him an opportunity of casting a glance at our internal affairs, which were in a very unsatisfactory situation. As he had resolved, while delegating a part of his authority to the Archchancellor Cambacérès, still to remain at the head of the administration, it is easy to understand that after so long an absence, amid such tumultuous and complicated events, he was not in a position to give the internal government that daily impulsion without which nothing could any longer work in France. As everything was subject to the decision of his disordered will, all business was suspended and stopped at the same time, and we see by his correspondence that before the slightest difference could be settled, or an arrangement made with the singers of the opera, it was necessary to send as far as Eylau to ask the conqueror what line of conduct was to be followed. With what competence, what acquaintance with the questions, the interests, the justice of the case, such judgments were given, it is useless for any

[1] Napoleon to Soult, February 28.

enlightened mind to examine. A general confusion, a sense of uneasiness, and a deplorable inertness in all branches of national activity except that which sustained the war, was the inevitable consequence of such a system. The alarm caused by the perilous situation of the army after Eylau was not calculated to lessen the evil.

Such confusion was the result of his policy, and however anxious he may have been to remedy it, it was not in his power to do so, so long as he persisted in carrying out his chimerical views. It is not possible for a man, even of a political genius far superior to that of Bonaparte, to govern a state well, much less a vast empire, five hundred leagues from its frontiers, in the midst of the agitations, the accidents, and the innumerable necessities of a military life. When Napoleon had ridden fifteen or twenty leagues in the day to visit his cantonments; when he had dictated the letters concerning the movements of his troops; when he had settled what measures should be taken in order to insure the punctual arrival of supplies, ammunition, and equipments, to send instructions to the different generals, to give harmony to the various operations, to carry on the sieges, and to conduct the negotiations,—it is obvious that there remained very insufficient time for the management of the internal affairs of the empire, and that he could give very little attention to them. The writers who represent him as bearing this enormous weight with ease, and ruling the empire from his camp at Osterode with a kind of omniscience and omnipresence, make use of a style of language that is more appropriate to theology than history. By a singular anomaly they are the same writers who, by reckoning that he had sixty thousand stragglers at Eylau, depict him as henceforth incapable of working the gigantic machine which he had organized under the name of the Grand Army.

This contradiction plainly shows how little their accounts can be depended upon. The truth is that, even in a military point of view, Napoleon was beginning to be overwhelmed by the vastness of his enterprises; his genius and activity still

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enabled him to overcome insuperable difficulties, but the frailty and defects in his work were betrayed at each turn, and at the first defeat it seemed to crumble away. Nominally he governed the empire; in his excessive jealousy of the prerogatives of his power, he had tried to keep all the threads of the administration in his own hands, but he had been compelled to delegate the greater portion of the real work to men whose docile mediocrity and absolute submission could give him no umbrage. He only kept a close watch over the police, the diplomatic agents, and the army, which were, it is true, in his eyes, the only essential organs of government. The despatch of current affairs was entrusted to the Secretary of State, Maret, who was authorized to examine the ministerial portfolios and prepare such decisions as were indispensable, and who presented the elements for them in the light that suited him best. An indefatigable worker, of a yielding and easy temper, without any settled principles or any views of his own, but possessing a thorough knowledge of the routine of business and of the weakness of his master, this perfect bureaucrat spared Napoleon the fatigue of a study, the weight of which would have overwhelmed him in the midst of his multifarious occupations. Under pretence of simplifying affairs, he deprived him by degrees of all control over them, and left him scarcely anything more than the signing of decrees which he had himself drawn up.

If Maret had been actuated by any preference for a particular system, or even by a love of power, this kind of clandestine usurpation might have proved dangerous to him, but as he only sought to satisfy a coterie that was more eager for lucrative places than influence in the state, and as he possessed in a rare degree the kind of merit that Napoleon appreciated the most in his servants—zeal and devotion—the favour that he enjoyed only increased with time. It was nevertheless very detrimental to the administration of affairs that the instrument ruled under the name of the master, and that the empire was governed by a man whose capacity did not exceed that of a first-rate clerk. We may believe Savary's testimony on this point, one of the blindest admirers of Napoleon, although his

criticism may have arisen rather from envy than sincere judgment. He deplores the influence obtained by Maret at this period, and adds: 'The Emperor was induced to believe that the people of Paris said they could not understand his activity, that it was impossible to deceive him in the smallest thing, that he read everything. Base adulation, that was attended with sad consequences! . . . . This manner of working began at Warsaw. It was too convenient to the Emperor, who heard nothing of the complaints it excited, and too advantageous to one who sought for power, *for it ever to be changed.*'[1]

Thus in the management of the current affairs of the country, in the settlement of matters which every day in a centralized state urgently require the eye of the master, such as administrative and judicial nominations, public works, finance, justice, the relations of private individuals with the state, the superintendence of economical interests, the work was left to inferior clerks; and Napoleon's prodigious activity, owing to the overwhelming occupations which he had created for himself abroad, procured nothing better for the country than the careless and somnolent rule of a roi fainéant. France was governed like a simple province of a great empire.

From time to time he showed that he was not sleeping, and set his mark upon some measure intended to make his enemies tremble, or his subjects walk in the right road. Now and then he reminded them of his existence by means of instructions sent to his different agents; but the only person with whom Napoleon kept up a close correspondence at home was Fouché. Through the medium of this minister, he imagined that he had at last conquered public opinion, the imperceptible antagonist that sports with the blows that are dealt to it. In this relentless pursuit Napoleon attacked by turns the tribune, the press, the newspapers, and the salons; but in spite of all his efforts, he never attained his end. The ironical Proteus was always there, bestowing a smile of incredulity upon his chimerical conceptions, his romance of universal domination, and his false victories. After Pultusk and Eylau, his lying bulletins deceived

[1] *Mémoires* du duc de Rovigo, vol. iii.

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nobody in France; even the letters from the army proved their untruthfulness. How could he defend himself after such contradictions? He very soon suppressed all correspondence between the army and home.[1] 'Cause the following report to be spread,' he wrote to Fouché. '*Circulate it first in the salons, and publish it afterwards in the papers.* The Russian army is so weakened, that there are regiments which are reduced to one hundred and fifty men. There are no more troops in Russia . . . . *the Russian army is asking for peace;* they accuse several great lords of having sold the blood of the Russians for the English,' etc.[2]

Fouché did his best. He even went so far as to forge a letter, in which a Russian officer took pains to show France how completely his countrymen were beaten by our soldiers. But Napoleon was not satisfied, although he had himself, on other occasions, suggested this trick to Fouché. 'I have seen in the papers,' he wrote to him on the 27th of March following, 'a pretended letter from Russia! . . . Everything that is published to *enlighten public opinion* appears to me to be written in a bad spirit, *just as if the author felt that what he wrote was not true.*' There was perhaps a certain ingenuity in requiring the blind and persuasive faith of an apostle from Fouché. It was plainly admitting that public opinion suborned even the police themselves, whom in general nothing influenced; and if he had examined more closely, he would have found that opinion had an accomplice in their own consciences.

Public opinion was everybody. It was just this, that rendered it at once so powerful and so impossible to arrest. Hence the singular and puerile irritation of Bonaparte against all persons who appeared to him to represent in any measure whatever that collective and intangible being, whom he was always pursuing without ever being able to lay hold on. The more powerless he felt against this impersonal and anonymous enemy, the heavier fell his anger upon those whom he could see and reach. Towards the end of March, 1807, this con-

[1] This proceeding commenced at the siege of Dantzic.
[2] Napoleon to Fouché, February 28.

queror, whose first levies had raised the army to more than six hundred thousand men, suddenly learned that a certain woman had been seen in the neighbourhood of Paris. It was quite enough to disturb the peace of his powerful mind. His letters were filled with invective against the woman, and reproaches for the ministers who tolerated her presence. 'I have written,' he said, in a letter to Cambacérès, 'to the minister of police, to send Madame de Staël to Geneva. . . . . That woman still continues to *intrigue*. She came near Paris against my orders. She is a real *nuisance*. My intention is that you speak seriously to the minister, for *I shall be compelled to have her arrested by the gendarmery*. Keep an eye also upon Benjamin Constant. I will no longer suffer any of this clique.'[1]

Madame de Staël was exiled afresh, and Napoleon breathed again. But he could never allude to this subject without losing all his calm. One might almost say that his imagination was struck, that he had a presentiment that this noble woman, who calculated the false grandeur of the empire with such a correct judgment, would one day witness its fall, and this kind of superstitious intuition inspired him with invectives that were almost ludicrously violent. 'I am glad to see,' he wrote to Fouché, the 18th of April, 'that I hear nothing more of Madame de Staël. . . . *That woman is a bird of ill omen. She thought the tempest had already come, and was delighting in intrigues and folly. Let her go off to her Lake Leman.*' A correct and well-grounded presentiment! What omen could in fact be more inauspicious for him than this detested name. It was a name that incessantly reminded him that in spite of his power, his seductions, and his prodigious success, there was something in the mind of his contemporaries that invincibly resisted him,—something that, with all his force, he could neither subjugate or destroy, not even in a defenceless woman. This something, at once so powerful and so frail, so full of vitality under an appearance of death, was the sovereign master of all human things, which may sometimes suffer passing

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, March 26, 1807.

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violences, but without which nothing is done here below that is great or lasting; it was the spirit of justice and liberty, his victim to-day, his conqueror to-morrow.

What is singular is that while Napoleon stifled with implacable and cowardly hatred all independent thought and lofty sentiment, he never for an instant lost sight of his project of reviving the great literary epochs. As the institution of the decennial prizes did not produce the effect he desired, he conceived a fresh plan. We have two long minutes from his pen at this date, relative to the encouragement to be given to letters, and the establishment of technical schools, which curiously display the disorder and incoherency of his ideas. He admits that the state is not a competent judge in this matter, that it is not its province to give places to poets, that their reward is in the approbation of the public; but at the same time he would have the *administration recommend authors to the attention* of this public. The encouragement of government had not answered so well as he had expected; he would therefore try the stimulant of an official censorship. He admired Richelieu for ordering the Academy to criticise the *Cid*. This littleness in a skilful minister appeared to him a stroke of genius. He saw in it the germ of a fruitful institution. He would imitate his example. 'It is at the Emperor's request,' he said, speaking on this subject, 'that the Institute criticises Abbé Delille's *Georgics*, not as a translation, but as a *chef-d'œuvre of language, poetry, and taste*; or one of the best cantos in Esménard's poem on *Navigation*, or one of the finest odes of Lebrun; or even, as a better proof of impartiality, one of the best pieces of poetry from the pen of Fontanes. The author criticised will perhaps at first show some ill-humour, but he will soon feel that the choice of his work is an encomium, and the public will be *interested and enlightened, and their taste improved!* . . . When once a system of judicious criticism is *regularly established*, we shall be able *to put a stop to the present mode of criticism*, or at any rate to correct its excesses.' The Institute is a great power in the hands of the minister!'[1] Oh, the sublimity of this universal genius! To

[1] April 19, 1807.

exile Madame de Staël, and to erect the Institute into a high court of administrative criticism in order to suppress free criticism, what an ingenious way of raising French literature, what a right it gives its author to the eternal admiration of fools! When we think that these miserable ideas have for so long passed for a model of wisdom and knowledge, we cannot restrain a certain pleasure in sounding the wooden idol to show its hollowness. It is vain for short-sighted men to deny this right to the historian; if it is true that the past is a lesson for the future, and that a nation grows enlightened and gathers strength by resolutely condemning the errors that it has committed, it is a duty to disclose the emptiness of the illusions that have led it astray.

The instructions which Napoleon dictated the same day on the teaching of geography and history, are far more sensible, though in these too the narrow anxiety which he manifested in everything is also revealed. Independent of his preference for military history, we see that he wished history to be made a mere chronicle of dates and facts, a sort of anatomy of events, stripped of everything from which a meaning, a moral lesson or a conclusion could be drawn. 'You will easily guess,' he wrote in this paper, 'that my *secret thought* is to gather together men who will write, *not philosophical history, nor religious history*, but *the history of facts*.' History without conclusions, that is to say, experience without teaching, science without generalization, society without principles, this was in reality the impossibility that he dreamed of. He endeavoured in every way to suppress ideality, and even the very soul of things, because he felt that this higher principle was necessarily against him. Was it not he who wished Mirabeau to be spoken of without any mention being made of what had made his power and inspiration, that is to say, his ideas? At the time of Maury's reception at the Academy, the president, the abbé Sicard, had thought fit to traduce the name of Mirabeau, and this excessive zeal had annoyed Napoleon, who wished them to abstain alike from blame and praise. 'There were things in that meeting of the Academy which did not please me,' he wrote to Fouché. 'It

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is not the province of the president of a learned society to speak of Mirabeau. If he must talk of him, he ought only to speak of his style: that alone is his affair.'[1] Only to speak of Mirabeau's style! It would be much the same as if posterity were only to speak of Napoleon's spelling. Fouché had orders 'to praise' Mirabeau in order to strike a balance, as if the glory of a great man depended on the speeches of an academy or the justifications of a minister of police!

The means which Napoleon conceived to revive industry and commerce were scarcely more efficacious than the encouragement that he proposed for literature. He had first asked the Council of State to institute an inquiry into the causes of the evil, and the remedy that might be applied. But could an assembly of officials be expected to give serviceable replies to such questions? The evil lay in himself. It was his mad system of conquest, of never-ending war, of universal compression; it was the continental blockade, the alarm of credit, confiscations by decree, forestalled conscriptions, sterility in all branches of production. The Council of State, greatly embarrassed by the task of removing the effects while they respected the cause, replied by a proposition, ridiculous enough under the circumstances, to furnish the palaces of the bishops and the prefectures, in order to give work to trades that were at a standstill. This luminous expedient did not suit Napoleon; but the one which he substituted for it was hardly better. He decided that a sum of 500,000 francs a month, or six millions a year, should be advanced to manufacturers who were in difficulties; the loans to be made on the condition that the factory should continue to work, and that a quantity of stock to the value of at least twice the sum lent should be deposited in a special warehouse. When Napoleon communicated this project to Cambacérès, he said: 'If this money is lent, *I suppose the loan gives me a mortgage.* If our civil laws do not ensure this, pass a decree to that effect.'[2] Such was the knowledge which

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, May 20. The publishers of the *Correspondance* have printed this '*il ne devait pas parles de son style*,' which has no sense.

[2] Napoleon to Cambacérès, March 26, 1807.

the great legislator, the immortal author of the code, that object of admiration of posterity, had of the laws which he was supposed to have made. But this loan, with or without a mortgage, was to lead him further than he expected. After having transformed the state into a pawnbroker and sleeping partner in manufactories, he had to go further and engage in commerce, for the goods deposited rapidly spoiled and had to be got rid of. Napoleon seemed at one time to have adopted this project, and to have entertained the idea of compelling the neutral vessels to export our products after having brought their own, but the only effect of this threat was to keep them away from our ports.

This assistance might have been useful in certain cases, but its inevitable publicity did the manufacturer a great injury, inasmuch as it was equivalent to a kind of declaration of bankruptcy, and it is, moreover, needless to point out its inadequacy. Six million francs to supply such a deficiency were like a drop of water to extinguish a fire. With regard to the complementary measures which Napoleon added to it, such as opening in Paris a workshop for military supplies, requesting his wife and sisters to make purchases at it, ordering his apartments in the Tuileries to be refurnished, they are expedients that might be expected from a child rather than from a statesman; and if they are generally brought forward as instances of his goodwill, they are also striking proofs of his incompetency. Such efforts could only be successful on condition that the real cause of the evils was attacked, that is to say, the insane policy which had produced them. If it is impossible to believe that Napoleon deceived himself on this point without denying him all clear-sightedness, we have the right to affirm that these calamities only touched him so far as they lessened his prestige and his popularity. He was anxious about them to a certain extent in France, because he knew what terrible strength the sufferings of the people could at a given moment communicate to the bitterness of public opinion; but among the other nations that were subject to our influence, he was as perfectly insensible to them as if the victims had been inhabitants of Saturn.

Of all these countries, Holland was the one that suffered the

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most, because she was neither rich in the products of her soil like Italy, nor gorged with the spoils of Europe like France. Ruined by the war, by the loss of her colonies, by the forced inaction of her navy, by the interruption of her commercial relations, this small nation, which did not possess enough territory to maintain it, had received a last blow in the continental blockade. They were nevertheless required to support an army of more than fifty thousand men.[1] King Louis endeavoured to alienate the misery that he saw around him by his simplicity, his economy, and his respect for the manners, customs, traditions, and susceptibilities of a people, who, though weak, were justly proud of their history. That there were some mistaken measures in the reforms undertaken by this well-meaning man is evident, but he had taken his task of ruling in earnest, he wished to gain the affection of his subjects, and this was a crime that Napoleon could not pardon. Louis had refused, in spite of his brother's reiterated injunctions, to establish the conscription and fresh taxes in Holland; he had refused to sacrifice the interests of the Protestants to the Catholic minority; he had won a reputation for gentleness and kindness; he had created a few honorary posts round his throne in order to reward the zeal of two or three distinguished men. A storm had for some time been gathering over his head; an accident sufficed to make it burst. On the 12th of January, a vessel laden with gunpowder exploded at Leyden, and blew up nearly eight hundred houses. King Louis, incapable in the distressed state of his finances of repairing the disaster, opened a public subscription which produced several million florins. This was enough to exasperate Napoleon. All his grievances were showered down at once in a torrent of invective and recrimination.

'Nothing is worse than *this collection* made by your orders throughout the kingdom. You govern this nation too much like a capuchin. The goodness of a king ought to be stately, and not like that of a monk. A king orders, and asks nothing

[1] *Documents historiques sur la Hollande*, par le roi Louis.

of anybody. . . . . I have an idea that you are *re-establishing the nobility*, and am anxious to be enlightened on this point. *Have you so completely lost your head* as to forget what you owe to me? Do you want to force me to express my great displeasure publicly? . . . . Pay my troops, make a large levy of conscripts. A prince who passes for good in the first year of his reign, is a prince who is ridiculed in the second. When a king is said to be a good man, his reign is an unsuccessful one . . . . The first thing that you ought to do, and that I had advised you, is to establish the conscription! . . . . I offered you my counsel, and you reply by fine compliments, and continue to *commit acts of folly!* . . . . Your quarrels with the queen also reach the public. . . . . You treat a young wife as you would treat a regiment. . . . . You have the best *and most virtuous* of wives, and you make her miserable. Let her dance as much as she likes, she is at the age for it. My wife is forty; from the field of battle I write to her to go to balls, and you want a woman of twenty to live in a cloister, or to be always washing her child, like a nurse! You have too virtuous a wife; if she were a coquette she would lead you by the nose!'[1]

It is very probable that in this torrent of reproaches there was more than one that was well-founded. And what man would not have laid himself open to some, in the difficult situation in which Louis was placed, as a husband married in spite of himself and a king compelled to receive a crown which he did not want? But if this was the régime to which Napoleon subjected *these independent though vassal kingdoms* which he boasted of having created, we must say that the position of king under such a master was the last that a man would have accepted who had any sense of his own dignity. The insult with which Napoleon overwhelmed poor Louis with regard to Queen Hortense, while he proposed to him for an example his own conduct towards Josephine, is the more singular, because his connection with the Countess V——, a Polish lady, celebrated for her beauty and her devotion, had been publicly

[1] Napoleon to the King of Holland, April 4, 1807.

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talked about for several months, and was known to every one. The strength of this passion had even been greatly exaggerated; it was spoken of as the cause of his recent failures, and it was openly said that he had found Capua in Poland.

History has no need to have recourse to the indiscreet disclosures of a valet-de-chambre on this point;[1] all the contemporary memoirs speak of the connection. Savary, among others, says in the troubadour style of the time that 'the Emperor, like his officers, paid tribute to the beauty of the Polish women. He could not resist the charms of one of them; he loved her tenderly, and met with a noble return.' The rumour of this romance reached Paris. Josephine was greatly distressed, and earnestly entreated permission to go to Warsaw. Hence the quantity of stereotyped letters which we find in the *Correspondence* of Napoleon, and of which the meaning would appear somewhat enigmatical, did we not know that they were written with a view to tranquillize his alarmed wife by the most tender declarations, and to deter her from the journey that she wanted to undertake: 'Keep up your spirits; live contented and happily; do not be sad. I love you; I think of you; I long for you. But do not come.' Such an affair was common enough, and we feel that there is very little that is interesting to be found in these chronicles of the alcove, especially at a period in which connections of this kind were carried on in open daylight; but is it not characteristic that it was at this very moment, when he was living in double adultery with another man's wife, that he ventured to mention himself to his brother as a model husband?

Among the acts for which Louis was reproached was his refusal to grant that influence to the Catholics which Napoleon demanded for them. In this the Emperor was certainly not actuated by any thought of an impossible restoration; but he believed he could make partisans, and he exaggerated the relative importance of the Catholic element in Holland. He wanted to have the Catholics for instruments, but he had no

[1] *Mémoires* de Constant, etc.

intention of yielding them one jot of his power. Ever since his disputes with the Court of Rome, he had closely watched the clergy and had his eye open to all their encroachments. We have a letter from him, written on the 5th of March in the same year, in reply to a request from the bishops of his empire with regard to the celebration of the Sunday, which is excellent in every point. These venerable prelates had thought that they could take advantage of his absence to usurp authority in a matter which they had very much at heart. He very clearly points out all the iniquity of their claims.

'It is contrary to divine law,' he said, 'to prevent a man, who has wants on the Sunday as well as on the other days of the week, from working to gain his bread. The government could not pass such a law, unless they gave bread to those who have none. . . . . Was it not Bossuet who said *Mangez un bœuf et soyez chrétien.*'

He very rightly makes a great distinction between laws that are really religious, and obligations that have been devised merely to extend the authority of the priests. 'Society,' he adds, 'is not composed of a contemplative order. Some legislators have tried to make it *an association of monks*, and to apply to it regulations that are only fit for the cloister. . . . We must take care. If this concession is made, the priests will not fail to require others. If once the government were made to interfere in matters which are not within its province, we should soon be brought back to those miserable periods in which the curés thought they had a right to rebuke a citizen who did not go to mass.' What a pity that in making such just criticisms on the absolute authority of the Catholics, he refused to see how applicable they were to his own government! No, it might have been replied, society is not made for a convent, nor is it made for a barrack. Did he not make not only the interests but even the opinions of the citizens subordinate to the government, which according to him had no right to interfere in the observance of Sunday? Did he not wish it to think, to act, and even to feel for them? Did he not dream of making the State an infallible authority, and the Institute a sort of lay

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inquisition, which should enforce orthodoxy even in literary criticism? Between religious Cæsarism which is the ideal of the Romish doctrine, and political Cæsarism which was the foundation of his system, there was only a nominal difference. It was two aspects of the same idea, two emanations of the same spirit; and if he mistrusted the first, it was because he had discovered in it a danger for the second.

CHAPTER III.

CAMPAIGN OF FRIEDLAND—INTERVIEW OF TILSIT.

(*June, July*, 1807).

NAPOLEON spent the months of March, April, and May in the midst of these various occupations, while his military preparations were executed with an accord and precision which formed a striking contrast to the slow and disconnected operations of the coalesced armies. Of the first levies, amounting to a hundred and sixty thousand men, some had been sent into Normandy and Brittany, to replace the old troops which he had withdrawn from these provinces; some into Italy, to increase Boudet's and Molitor's divisions, which were called to the Elbe, and the rest were distributed among the twenty new regiments of infantry, and the ten regiments of cavalry, with which he had reinforced his army. This distribution indicates the movement which he impressed on the immense mass of men of which he disposed. Warned by his check at Eylau and by the doubtful attitude of Austria, he had felt the danger of his isolation. At such a distance from what may be called his natural reserves, while he increased their strength he had also changed their centre. From France, from Italy, and from Holland, he had sent them as far as the Elbe. Germany was deluged with them.

Independent of Mortier's corps d'armée, which had been rendered available by the truce with the Swedes, and of Lefebvre's corps, which the capitulation of Dantzic had set free, we had in Germany an army of observation of nearly a hundred

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thousand men,[1] composed of the Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Bavarian, Würtemberg, and Saxon contingents, the old and the new levies, to which he added several French divisions, and very soon after the forces of our army in Silesia now released. This army was placed under the command of Marshal Brune. It occupied the North of Germany from Hamburg to Stettin, keeping the English and the Swedes in check on one side, and Austria on the other. It served as a *point d'appui* for the one which Napoleon had kept under his own orders, and of which he had just raised the effective force to its full complement. This second army, which was the active army, now numbered nearly a hundred and seventy thousand men. He had repaired their losses, and remounted the cavalry with the greatest care. Abundantly provided with supplies, owing to the number of strong places which had fallen into our hands, it was now much more formidable than at the opening of the campaign.

This time, so well employed by Napoleon, had been spent by the coalesced army in vain demonstrations, or in preparations disproportioned to the end they proposed to attain. After their vexatious defeat before Constantinople, the English had thrown themselves upon Egypt, but they gained nothing there, and were beaten after a short and useless occupation of Alexandria. The expeditions which they undertook against Buenos Ayres, and other colonies of the French or of their allies, were not for the most part more successful. They did not advance the common cause, and had only served to exasperate Russia, who was already wounded by their refusal to guarantee a loan of six millions sterling.[2] On the other hand, they neglected the only diversion which could have been advantageous to their allies, the landing, which had been planned but was always postponed, of an expeditionary corps on the coasts of the Baltic, to relieve both Stralsund and

[1] This is the estimate which Napoleon gives in a letter to Brune, May 30, 1807, including the Poles and the army of Silesia.

[2] In January, 1807. Letter from Lord Howick to Mr. Douglas, January 13.

Dantzic. The only attempt to come to the assistance of the defenders of Dantzic during the whole course of the siege was made by the Russians; but they did not employ sufficient forces. Their troops were obliged to re-embark after having sustained considerable losses, and the place capitulated after fifty days of firing from the trenches.

This siege which had in the beginning been extremely difficult, gained Lefebvre the title of Duke of Dantzic, a distinction which awarded to this old accomplice of the eighteenth Brumaire the honour of an exploit of which all the merit belonged to Chasseloup and Lariboisière (May 24). Shortly after, Neisse and Glatz in Silesia fell. Bennigsen saw the last positions which he occupied in our rear give way one after another, and still their danger never suggested to him the idea of hastening his attack, so as to profit by the embarrassment which they created for us, nor did their fate even make him understand the necessity of prudence. He had on his side received important reinforcements during the three months of inaction, but these reinforcements were very inferior to ours. Alexander had sent him his guard, *the sacred troops*, as they were called in St. Petersburg. 'Be a credit to yourselves, brothers,' exclaimed the emperor, when he took leave of his soldiers; and with one voice they replied: 'We will do all that is possible. Farewell, Lord!' One division had left with the guard, which had raised Bennigsen's effective force to about a hundred and twenty-five thousand men, including the Prussians and the corps which had remained upon the Narew. A reserve corps of thirty thousand men under the orders of Prince Labanoff, was marching to join them. This marked inferiority, especially after the opportunity of striking a useful blow during the siege of Dantzic had been lost, ought to have suggested a system of temporisation, which the Russian generals did not adopt till 1812, and Bennigsen seems to have been tempted for an instant to follow it, at least if we may believe an expression which he is reported to have made use of at St. Petersburg. 'I want,' he said, '*to file at* (*limer*) Bonaparte.'[1]

[1] De Maistre, *Correspondance diplomatique*, March, 1807.

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These tactics would have been the more advantageous, because his troops had much more firmness than mettle, and were superior in homogeneousness and strength of resistance to the great cosmopolitan army that was preparing to invade their territory.

But he would have had to abandon the intrenched camp of Heilsberg, and to sacrifice the rich stores of Königsberg, and nothing is more difficult in war than to keep to a prudent system, especially after a triumph, and with soldiers inured to hardships and animated by the hope of victory. With the choice of attacking us, or retiring successively behind the Pregel and the Niemen, Bennigsen could not resist the temptation of again taking up the offensive, and this time as before it was the hope of surprising Ney's corps which suggested to him the idea. Our troops had remained in their positions upon the Passarge, from Braunsberg where Bernadotte was encamped, to Hohenstein where Davoust was quartered. Farther south, towards Omuleff, was Masséna, whom Napoleon had recalled from Italy, and not far from him, at Neidenburg, Zajonchek with twenty thousand Poles. In the centre, from Osterode to Liebstadt, were the corps of Lannes and Soult, supported by Mortier's corps which kept a little farther back towards the Lower Vistula. Ney alone at Guttstadt occupied an advanced position beyond the Passarge and at a little distance from Heilsberg, where Bennigsen's intrenched camp was situated.

This isolated position in the midst of forests which concealed the movements of the enemy, exposed Ney's corps to serious perils. Bennigsen resolved to surprise it, in order to take advantage of the disorder into which this bold stroke would throw our cantonments. On the 5th of June the Russian army unexpectedly attacked us on several points at once. Two of these attacks, that of Spanden and of Lomitten, were only demonstrations, intended to keep in check Bernadotte's and Soult's detachment which lined this side of the Passarge. The others, directed with more considerable forces upon Ney's left at Wolfsdorf, upon his right at Guttstadt, and upon his rear at Bergfried, were undertaken in the hope of cutting him off from

the rest of the army. It was an admirably conceived plan, and the sudden assault placed Marshal Ney from the outset in imminent peril; but Bennigsen, badly served by his lieutenants, Sacken and Gortschakoff, in an operation which required a great deal of harmony, precision, and rapidity, saw all his efforts fail before the calmness and intrepidity of his adversary. On the 5th of June, while our detachments held their ground at Spanden and Lomitten, Ney, attacked by triple forces, retrograded as far as Ankendorf, but he did it step by step still opposing the Russians. The next day, the 6th, he reached Deppen, and was able to retire behind the Passarge, after having given fresh battle, in order to ensure this difficult retreat which was so glorious for him.

When once this first battle was lost, it was the Russian turn to retrograde, for the whole of the French army, rapidly rallied by Napoleon, marched on to drive them back and had already outflanked their right. Bennigsen regained Heilsberg and resolved to give battle there, hoping that a strong concentration and the defences of his intrenched camp would supply the deficiency of number. It was from there that he saw the corps of Soult, Lannes, Davoust, and Murat's guard and cavalry, successively emerge during the day of the 10th. The strong rear-guard which Bennigsen had left behind him to cover the approaches of his intrenched camp, was attacked with impetuosity by our advance-guard, and compelled to retire after a vigorous and sanguinary resistance. But our troops did not reach the foot of the enemy's intrenchments till towards nine o'clock in the evening. The intrenched camp of Heilsberg, situated upon both sides of the Alle, of which we only occupied the left bank, offered great advantages to the Russian army, by permitting them to operate on either bank as they chose, but it had the inconvenience of dividing them in two, and Napoleon flattered himself that he could turn this natural obstacle to account and take each half of the camp separately. Profiting accordingly by the enthusiasm of his soldiers, he ordered an attack to be made immediately on the intrenchments on the left bank by Soult's and Lannes' corps, supported by Murat's

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guard and cavalry. Soult first rushed forward, but received by a murderous fire, and charged by the Russian cavalry, he endeavoured in vain to take these strong positions. Murat and Lannes advanced in their turn, without being more successful. General Legrand alone captured a redoubt, and established himself in it with a regiment, but he was overwhelmed with grape shot and was very soon forced to evacuate it. At last the guard intervened to extricate two of our divisions. The battle which had commenced by a triumph ended in a defeat that was not dangerous, but very sanguinary. The useless slaughter continued far into the night, and Soult's corps especially sustained enormous losses. We left from eight to ten thousand men dead or wounded at the foot of the fortifications of Heilsberg, while the Russians owing to the superiority of their positions scarcely lost more than half this number.

The next day Napoleon, instead of again storming the intrenchments of Heilsberg, determined to overthrow this position by turning it, feeling convinced that the mere fear of seeing himself outstripped at Königsberg would suffice to induce Bennigsen to decamp. He accordingly marched upon Landsberg, running the risk of having his communications cut off, which he could do without danger, seeing the superiority of his forces over those of his adversary. Bennigsen immediately abandoned Heilsberg, which could no longer serve him as a basis of operations for want of sufficient supplies,[1] and removed to the right bank of the Alle after having burned the bridges. During the 11th, 12th, and 13th of June, the two armies descended the river in parallel lines; but the Russians were obliged to follow the windings, while our corps d'armée which were the furthest in advance gained the north by more direct roads, and reconnoitered as far as Königsberg. Murat and Davoust were threatening this place, driving before them Lestocq and the Prussians, who had preceded them there. Soult had advanced as far as Kreutzberg, in order to support their movement.

[1] This is the reason which he himself gives in his Report of June 11, 1807.

Lannes was at Domnau. At some distance behind him, before and beyond Eylau, came Mortier's and Ney's corps, the guard with Napoleon, and Victor in the place of Bernadotte, who had been wounded at Spanden. Such was the position of our army on the 13th of June. On the other side of the Alle, the Russian army was marching near Friedland. Napoleon's sole desire at this moment was to take Königsberg before the arrival of Bennigsen. All his orders were to this effect. He did not doubt that the appearance of Soult together with Davoust and Murat would decide the town to surrender. He thought Bennigsen was retreating fast, and never for a moment supposed that he intended to attack us. He had, however, ordered Lannes to occupy Friedland, which was with Wehlau the only point at which the Russians could debouch for attack.

But the improbable was found to be the true, and Bennigsen's imprudence afforded Napoleon, who dreamed of nothing of the kind, an opportunity of gaining one of his most brilliant victories. Bennigsen was covered by the Alle; he could by descending this river reach the Pregel in safety, and if Königsberg offered us ever so slight a resistance, arrive there in time to give us battle. What motive could have induced him to recross to the left bank of the Alle, to attack us there? Various reasons have been given for the Russian general's sudden determination. It has been said that he hoped by taking the shortest road to reach Königsberg before us. But how can we admit that he could have expected to pass a whole army by the way, and outstrip them? In his letters to the Emperor Alexander, he only alleges in justification the necessity of protecting himself from an attack on his left. The French, he said, showed an intention of marching upon Friedland and Wehlau, in order to cut him off from the Pregel. He consequently sent his infantry to take possession of Friedland, so that his troops might rest in security. The infantry was attacked; he supported it, and was gradually drawn into a general action. The explanation is not very plausible, for it is certain that our army was marching upon Königsberg and not upon Friedland and Wehlau. It is more probable that the

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dispersion of our corps d'armée suggested to him the idea of a flank attack, which might have been successful if it had been made with more vigour and decision.

Be this as it may, a detachment of Russians occupied Friedland on the evening of the 13th of June, after having driven out the regiment of hussars which Lannes had sent to take possession of the town. On the 14th, at three o'clock in the morning the Russians began to debouch upon the plain which it overlooks. The troops that successively passed over to the left bank of the Alle can scarcely be estimated at more than fifty-five to sixty thousand men.[1] This was a sufficient number to beat one by one those of our corps which were in the vicinity; but it was important not to leave them time to concentrate. The attack ought to have been made with that overwhelming rapidity of which only Bonaparte was capable; for when once united, our forces were superior to those of the Russians, who had moreover the serious disadvantage of fighting with a river behind them. These corps d'armée, still scattered between Eylau and Friedland, numbered at least between eighty thousand and ninety thousand men. They comprised those of Lannes, of Ney, of Mortier, of Victor, and the guard. Lannes occupied the village and the woods of Posthenen, near Friedland. It was easy to defeat this isolated corps before the arrival of Mortier, who was nearest to it; and as proof that in war execution is everything, the situation in which Bennigsen was about to meet with a defeat was precisely the same in which Napoleon was himself placed at Jena, where he obtained one of his finest victories. There we had also to fight with our backs against a river and a kind of gulf; but instead of leaving our enemies time to meet and to concentrate, instead of crossing the Saale on the morning of the battle and

[1] Their reports say 46,000 men, a number that cannot be accepted any more than the exaggerations of their adversaries. Our calculation is made by reckoning the whole of the forces that had entered upon the campaign, and deducting, first, the corps left on the Narew; second, Lestocq's corps and Kamenski's division, which had been sent to Königsberg; third, the troops left upon the right bank; fourth, the losses sustained in the previous battles.

before the eyes of the Prussians, Napoleon had crossed it during the night, so as to be able to attack them from the outset with his united forces. Bennigsen on the contrary spent a great part of the morning in passing over the bridges of the Alle; he was obliged to leave more than half his artillery on the opposite bank. He only engaged his divisions successively; he attacked Lannes feebly and disconnectedly, and he consequently left the other corps sufficient time to come to his assistance.

Lannes, intrenched at Posthenen, sustained the first assault of the Russians with an energy that was the more meritorious on account of his great inferiority. As soon as he recognised the danger of his position, he sent estafette after estafette to Napoleon. The Emperor could not believe Bennigsen capable of such rashness; he thought he merely meant to make a demonstration. But the number of troops which the Russians deployed on the left bank of the river increased every hour. Their general, not knowing how precious the time was, and being in no hurry to seize a prey which in his presumption he thought could not escape him, seemed more anxious to establish himself and take possession of the field of battle, than to make Lannes' corps prisoners. A part of his troops had taken up their position in the almost acute angle which the Alle forms in winding round the town of Friedland; the rest extended to the right in the direction of Heinrichsdorf, as if to close in the more easily upon their feeble adversary. But Mortier's corps and Grouchy's and Nansouty's cavalry had already come to Lannes' assistance, and the task was rendered more difficult. They impetuously charged the Russian line, broke it and established themselves at Heinrichsdorf after a resolute struggle. It was evident, however, that they could not remain there unless they were vigorously supported. They had great difficulty in resisting the masses that attacked them on all sides, and it was plain that in another instant they would be crushed. It was at this decisive moment that Napoleon arrived at Posthenen with Ney's guard, closely followed by Victor's corps, and it is a significant proof of the incredible indecision of his adversary, that he had the time to survey the two

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armies, and dictate his dispositions for the battle, as he would have done at the beginning of the combat. It was in reality a second battle that was about to begin. Mortier formed our extreme left at Heinrichsdorf and beyond it; he was to decline the attacks of the enemy so as to draw him further on in the plain. Lannes was posted in the centre, between Posthenen and Heinrichsdorf. At his right were concentrated both Ney's and Victor's corps and the guard, to whom Napoleon reserved the task of striking the blow that was to decide the day. The Russians, who were much stronger than ourselves in the morning, but now much weaker, could only escape by a precipitate retreat over the bridges of Friedland. This was the point then on which we were to direct all our efforts, for when once these bridges were occupied or destroyed, their army was at our mercy. It was Ney whom Napoleon ordered to carry them at any price, by rushing headlong upon Friedland.

It was half-past five in the evening when the marshal started with his troops, protected by a formidable artillery which sent its fire in the direction of the town. On emerging from the wood in which they had been placed in ambush, his columns were charged by the Russian cavalry, but Latour-Maubourg rushed forward with his dragoons and drove them back. At the same time Sénarmont, who commanded Victor's artillery, advanced it by a stroke of daring nearly four hundred paces closer to the Russian line, which he routed with his cannon in the narrow space in which it was deployed. Ney boldly continued his march. Close to a pond which is formed under the walls of the town by a stream called the mill-stream, he was unexpectedly attacked by the Russian guard, to whom this post had been confided. Bisson's division could not resist these choice troops, who charged them with the bayonet. They were led back in disorder; the rest wavered. Ney's column was in great peril. It fell back half broken. Fortunately General Dupont saw the danger. He rushed forward in his turn with his division, surprised and broke through the Russian guard, and then drove them towards Friedland after a real massacre.

Ney rallied his troops, and with his united forces rushed upon the flaming town, in pursuit of the dismayed Russians. Resistance was no longer thought of. Each tried to save himself. It was a frightful pell-mell of soldiers of all arms, crushing each other as they flew to the only issue that was open to them. Some of the fugitives succeeded in gaining the bridges; others were thrown into the Alle, in which they were drowned.

While Ney was achieving the work of destruction which gave us the victory, Lannes and Mortier who had hitherto confined themselves to keeping back the Russian right, which was commanded by Prince Gortschakoff, began to press more closely upon it. The prince had received somewhat late an order from Bennigsen to retreat, and had not obeyed. He now found himself between Friedland—where the bridges were burned—and the strong semi-circle that Lannes and Mortier had formed round him. Nevertheless neither he nor his troops thought of surrender. While his last battalions were prolonging the defence, he led his cavalry in despair along the banks of the Alle, which his soldiers at length forded. Favoured by the night, they succeeded in escaping.

The Russians lost at Friedland in killed and wounded nearly twenty thousand men. The French army scarcely lost half this number.[1] Bennigsen gained the Pregel in all haste, and from thence Tilsit, where he was joined by Lestocq and Kamenski who had evacuated Königsberg on hearing of the victory of Friedland. On the 19th of June the Russian army retired behind the Niemen, after having destroyed the bridge of Tilsit. The territory of the empire was still untouched, Prince Labanoff's corps had effected their junction, and the Niemen

[1] This is of course only a rough estimate. The lies of the bulletins, both French and Russian, are so great, that it is impossible to arrive at even relative truth. Napoleon reckoned the number of Russians killed at eighteen thousand, that of the French at five hundred. The Russian reports only estimated their total loss at eight thousand men. They affirmed that they had only lost sixteen pieces of cannon; Napoleon said a hundred and twenty. Compare the seventy-ninth and eightieth bulletins, Bennigsen's report to the Emperor Alexander, Plotho, Jomini, Mathieu Dumas, Robert Wilson, and the *Mémorial du dépôt de la guerre*, vol. viii.

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offered Bennigsen a strong line of defence, but his troops were discouraged, and the exhausted state of the monarchy was revealed by a significant circumstance. Our soldiers who had rushed to the edge of the river in pursuit of the Russians, perceived on the opposite bank some Baskirs and Calmucks armed with arrows, a proof to what extremities the empire was reduced. Alexander asked for an armistice. Napoleon proposed an interview, which was accepted. The question has been raised whether the proposition came from Napoleon or from Alexander. If it were not proved that it was made by Duroc in the name of his sovereign, we should still settle the question *à priori* in the affirmative, so completely is this step conformable to the character and habits of Napoleon. He knew from experience the sort of fascination that he exercised over men that were but little capable of judging him; he had even begun to exaggerate this singular power from having used it with such extraordinary success in so many circumstances of his life. He almost considered it as infallible, and in the effect which he produced he no longer made any allowance for what was caused by fear and flattery, but attributed it all to the prestige created by his marvellous fortune. A personal interview with Alexander offered him in lieu of the indirect and remote influence which he could exercise over a congress, an opportunity of concentrating on a single man, on whom everything depended, that power of seduction with which nature had endowed him, and which would have been an incomparable art if it had been less apparent. He took care not to lose so precious a chance.

The Emperor, Napoleon had neither modified his projects nor his policy. Versatile to an almost incredible extent with regard to the choice of means, and ready to change them with circumstances, he pursued his end with all the tenacity of a fixed idea. In reality his great object had never for an instant ceased to be England, because he justly felt that there was the true centre of continental resistance. At the commencement of the war he had taken for his programme 'to conquer England on the Continent.' This programme had

been half carried out; for if he could not flatter himself that he had vanquished England, he had disarmed the Continent. The Russians, driven back upon their own frontier and placed almost *hors de combat*, could attempt nothing against him. It was dangerous to think of conquering Russia, for if the European powers were already subdued, they were still quivering. But it was perhaps not impossible to gain her support; if so, what a magnificent simplification for Napoleon's projects! That ally which he had felt somewhat late the necessity of finding among the European states,—which in his distress before and after Eylau he had by turns sought in Austria and Prussia, powers mutilated and weakened by him, and consequently very doubtful friends,—was here personified in a young and ambitious state, which from its very distance had no real and direct opposition of interests with France. If this ally were gained, all Europe would bow down before him, and instead of having to fight England *on the Continent*, Napoleon would be able to fight England *with the Continent*, which would be wholly enlisted under his banner. And when once England was crushed, what power would be able to resist him? What he perceived beyond was no longer the conquest of Europe, it was the empire of the world.

Alexander's feelings were rather those of discouragement than hope. He was humiliated by his sudden defeat, disgusted with his ungrateful office of European mediator, weary of his disinterestedness so ill rewarded, and above all dissatisfied with his old allies. England had done nothing to support him; she had only thought of herself. The weak successors of Fox had not perceived that in allowing their allies to be crushed and the common cause to be jeopardied, for the sake of seizing a few colonies, they exposed their country to the greatest danger that it had ever incurred. As for Austria, she had only offered a useless mediation at a time when a diversion made by her army would have saved all. Prussia alone had brought Alexander a courageous and faithful co-operation, but it had been of no service. Was this the reward for the numberless sacrifices which he had made for the independence of all? Had

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Russian territory or the national honour for a moment been threatened? No, all that Alexander had done, he had done with chivalrous and disinterested views, in the belief that it was for the general good, for European public right, for civilization; and if the illusions of youth and self-love had had any influence over his determinations, they had at least been pure from all selfish and narrow ambition. Was it not time to think of the interests of his crown, of the welfare and security of his subjects? to give up his utopias, the philanthropic dreams by which he had been beguiled?

Nothing could have been more dangerous for Alexander, and especially for the cause which he had hitherto defended, than such feelings at the moment of coming in contact with the powerful tempter who was extending his hand, for these sentiments were exactly such as Napoleon would have wished to suggest to him. His principal object had always been to flatter and encourage such repentance and such ambition, whenever he had tried to induce a power to accept his system. It had been so with England at the time of the famous interview with Lord Whitworth; it had been so with Prussia when he offered her Hanover; with Russia when he had dazzled the credulous Emperor Paul by his false promises. It was in this way also that he had acted with Alexander himself, when, the day before Austerlitz, endeavouring to win over Prince Dolgorouki, he had exclaimed: 'Well! let Russia extend her frontier at the expense of her neighbours!' This suggestion had then been rejected with disdain, and even after Austerlitz, Alexander had refused to listen to it. But things were changed since then. His adversary's fortune had only been increased by the obstacles that had been placed in his way. Nothing had withstood him; nothing either of old systems or of new ideas. Pitt had died of grief; Nelson had fallen in his last victory; Fox had been laughed to scorn, and was dead; the Prussian monarchy had been swept away in a day; in France all opposition had been destroyed. Rights, liberty, virtue, genius, all had bowed before him, all had given way to him. Was not this a sign of destiny, a proof that this unprecedented

domination was in the force of things, and was it not better to share it than to be ruined in braving it?

The first words which the two emperors exchanged, after having embraced each other as they set foot on the raft at Tilsit, showed Napoleon how much Alexander's feelings had changed since Austerlitz. 'I hate the English as much as you do yourself,' said the Czar. 'If that is the case,' replied Napoleon, 'peace is made.' All Alexander's ill will, all his disappointment, was contained in this simple phrase; and for Napoleon also, it held the knot of all the questions which he had to discuss with Alexander. Compared with this principal object, the surrender of the English alliance, everything else was secondary. If once Alexander were induced to side against England, he could easily be persuaded to abandon the other powers on the Continent; he would become the ally of France, who would have an interest in removing all obstacles, and if he still had any scruples left, they could be quieted by giving him a large share of profits.

The first interview lasted for two hours. The two sovereigns found so much advantage in it, that they agreed to neutralize the town of Tilsit, in order to continue the conversation at their leisure. The King of Prussia hastened there to plead his own cause which was in great peril, and very feebly defended by his powerful friend. This unfortunate king, the victim of his own uprightness—for he had not declared war on us till he was driven to extremities by our iniquitous proceedings?—embarrassed them both. He reminded Alexander of promises and engagements that were difficult to keep, and Napoleon of his odious violations of the rights of nations. Despoiled of all his kingdom with the exception of Memel, abandoned by courtiers who are always driven away by bad fortune, he was an importunate witness to an intimacy to which he was not admitted. His anxious face saddened this sort of honeymoon of a friendship which was never to end. They were irritated with him for it, and took little pains to conceal their annoyance. The day was spent in reviews, military fêtes, and banquets, at which the officers of the two armies exchanged their insignia in token

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of friendship. When night came, the two emperors shut themselves up to treat of their affairs together.

Alexander appeared delighted at this familiarity with the hero of so many terrible exploits. This sovereign, who was only twenty-eight years of age, possessed with a noble and benevolent expression of countenance the distinguished manners of a gentleman of the end of the eighteenth century,—a type that has since disappeared, in which natural ease was united with a lofty bearing to a degree that will perhaps never be found again. To this perfect courtesy of manners and language, he joined the careless gracefulness of the Eastern nations, the almost feminine refinement and flexibility which give so great a charm to the Slave character. Nothing certainly could form a more complete contrast to Napoleon at this period of his career. Grave, reserved, and silent as he was at the time of his début, he, now that he had no longer to impose any restraint upon himself, spoke very loud and used many gestures. He expressed the most decided and absolute opinions with extreme volubility, and with an eloquence which he had created for himself, that was full of imagination, of glow, and of fire, but that was also unequal and incoherent. None knew better than he how to be by turns flattering and imperious, insinuating and haughty. But he had no moderation; whichever character he assumed, he assumed completely, as a man accustomed to dazzle, to subdue, to be always acting. He consequently easily became pompous when he wanted to be dignified, and vulgar when he wanted to be simple, often introducing a harlequin's trick in the midst of a tirade after Talma. There was no doubt a powerful seduction in his language, but it was a kind of armed speech which made his interlocutor suspicious, and overwhelmed without persuading him. The artifice, the calculation, the intention of laying hold of his opponent and drawing him along by the abundance, the accumulation, and impetuosity of his ideas were all too evident, and the result was that his conversation was most frequently only a long monologue. Men came away from the interview astonished, silenced, but not convinced. His natural violence was betrayed

at every instant by vehement gesticulations and hasty expressions. What he wanted most was ease. He had none of the coolness, the simple and calm dignity, of a man who is master of himself, who says plainly what he means, and who knows what is due to others. This sublime player had one great defect in his style of acting—he allowed the immense contempt he felt for humanity to be too clearly seen. The courtesy that gives such a charm to social intercourse does not depend on insinuating manners, it is based upon respect for others; and when this respect is not felt, the great art is to be able to feign it. Macaulay, in comparing Napoleon to Cæsar, very rightly says that Cæsar was greatly his superior on one point, he was a *perfect gentleman.* Talleyrand wittily expressed nearly the same thing when he said, 'What a pity that such a great man should have been so badly brought up!' If we may judge, not from the reports of his enemies, but from the disclosures of his most faithful and devoted servitors, Napoleon treated those who were admitted into his intimacy with a familiarity that no man who had any self-respect would have tolerated for a minute. Meneval, his former secretary, represents him as pulling the ears of his interlocutors, sometimes hard enough to make the blood flow, giving them a slap on the cheek, at times even sitting down on their knees. These acts of graciousness were marks of special kindness with him, and men of the highest rank were proud of such tokens of favour. Such habits were calculated to produce stiffness in his manners with strangers. He was too familiar when he wished to please, and too stiffly declamatory when he wished to command respect.

As to his body, the fatigues of war had strengthened his iron constitution, and given him a stoutness bordering on embonpoint. Napoleon acknowledged that he was never better than during this hard campaign, in which he often rode thirty leagues a day over the snow. The agitations of war may be said to have become needful to his temperament, a necessity for his health, and in some sort the indispensable aliment of that immense activity which was the predominant characteristic of his nature. He literally lived on what would have killed

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others. War gave him both sleep and appetite. This campaign of Poland, in which he had lost fifty thousand men, had only been healthy exercise for him, and he brought back from it a most flourishing appearance. This rude health had somewhat spoilt that effigy on an antique medal, which had remained graven on the imagination since the Italian wars; it had given weight to a body which formerly seemed to be consumed by the fire of his genius, but the extraordinary restlessness of his inquisitive and penetrating eye, the incessant uneasiness of his whole person, betrayed the internal agitation of his anxious mind. A great deal of the Corsican still remained in him. He had passed through the refined civilization, the kind of philosophical chaos, of the end of the eighteenth century, appropriating to himself with a wonderful faculty of assimilation all that could be of service to him; he had turned to account its ideas, adopted its forms and language, but in reality the primitive man had been but little modified. He had retained even certain superstitions of his countrymen, which were like stamps of his origin. He whose only religion was a faith, more often affected than real, in his star, was sometimes seen, says Meneval, suddenly to make an involuntary sign of the cross on the announcement of some great danger or some grave event. And the naïf secretary adds, in order to give a philosophical turn to the fact, that this gesture might be interpreted by the expression, Almighty God! Under his apparent good nature too, and his feline gracefulness of manner when he wished to appear kind, was hid the old harshness and insurmountable mistrust of the islander always on his guard against his enemies. It was noticed that during the nineteen days that the two emperors spent together, in the midst of effusions of the tenderest friendship, Alexander took his meals every day with Napoleon, but Napoleon never once broke bread with Alexander. He displayed the same caution at the time of the interview of Erfurt. In his visits to the Czar he always presented himself surrounded by an escort, of which the number and force formed a striking contrast to the unreserved confidence of the Russian sovereign.[1]

[1] De Maistre, *Correspondance diplomatique*, published by Albert Blanc.

We only know by inference a part of the secrets exchanged in these long interviews. They had for the most part no other witness than the two emperors; but the very stipulations of the treaties of Tilsit throw such a light on them that we have no need to have recourse to vain conjectures. It was the conqueror—and the fact was novel and significant—who offered the concessions, and the vanquished who accepted them! The question for Napoleon was not to dictate peace to exhausted Russia, but to gain Alexander's heart at any price, and, as he himself said in a note addressed to that sovereign, 'to pass in one moment from open war to the most friendly relations.'[1] Under the influence of the idea which governed him, and following his constant method in diplomacy as in war, of making everything give way to the principal end, Napoleon sacrificed to the young emperor the interests of our allies and the invariable traditions of French policy. He swore to Turkey that he never would make peace without her, and that he would maintain her integrity; he offered Alexander Moldavia and Wallachia, or at least he undertook to obtain them for him, and if Turkey resisted—well, then the powers would divide Turkey between them! Nor was he more sparing of Persia, whom he had also drawn into this war, and upon whose alliance he had formed such gigantic dreams. His ambassador, Gardane, had scarcely arrived at Teheran before all this was changed. With regard to the Poles whom he had encouraged and so freely used, he would no longer take their country into consideration; all he would do for them should be to give Saxony the provinces which belonged to Prussia. He even increased by two hundred thousand souls the part which fell to Russia in the spoils of this unfortunate country. Of those whom he himself called our necessary and natural allies, there remained Sweden, who had been unwillingly drawn by her king into the war against France. Why should not Alexander take Finland from her? Was it fit that the fine ladies of St. Petersburg should hear the guns of Sweden from their palaces? Let him not hesitate then to spoil a prince who had for so long fought under the Russian standard!

[1] Napoleon to Alexander, July 4, 1807.

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Let him learn to place his interests above his sympathies! That was the only policy worthy of a great empire. It ensured certain and positive advantages to Russia, while the Quixotism of Alexander, and his plans for the regeneration of Europe, had only brought disaster. And in exchange for these immense concessions, and for the influence that would accrue from them, what was asked of him? That he should give up dreams that were proved to be chimerical; that he would remain neutral on questions which in no way affected the interests of Russia; and that he would promise Napoleon a moral support which would involve no active assistance.

Thus spoke the tempter to the young man whom he expected to dazzle, without dreaming that he was himself the dupe of his own infatuation. It was, in fact, Napoleon who lost by this alliance, of which he hoped one day alone to reap the fruit. What did Alexander give in return for the aggrandisements which were lavished on him with so much liberality? Promises and words; nothing more. He recognised the new kingdoms founded by Napoleon; but his recognition did not give them more stability. He promised to join in measures taken against England; but this was an indefinite engagement to be fulfilled much later; one that was capable of many interpretations, and that it would not be impossible to modify, if not to elude altogether. He allowed his friend the King of Prussia to be sacrificed, it was true; but it was not a complete sacrifice, it left him a fraction of his states, which might be used to recover the others. In everything he only gave the uncertain for the certain. What was ceded to him was irrevocable; what he granted was provisional. It was Napoleon, too—and this was characteristic of the man—who fulfilled his part of the agreement the first; it was he who paid in advance. This deep searcher of the human heart seemed no longer to doubt whether the debtor would pay his debt; he appeared to have forgotten that men are inconstant, that they do not always feel bound to be eternally grateful, even when they have an interest in showing ingratitude. It never occurred to him that, after the immense advantages which had

been given him, Alexander might in all sincerity make engagements which, when there was no longer anything to be gained by them, would appear very inconvenient to fulfil.

It required, therefore, no great effort of duplicity on the part of Alexander to appear seduced and enchanted by a conqueror who came to him with his hands full of presents, instead of compelling him to submit to the hard law of war. He was only asked for 'future things,' which never cost much when the equivalent is paid in ready money. For the present he discharged his duty in admiring, and in offering subtle and delicate flattery to the great man who wished to show him his plans, to open his heart to him, to teach him the secrets of his policy. Did he even then go so far as to say that the conduct of this hero towards the allies who had compromised themselves for him, and particularly towards Turkey whom he had drawn into the war, offered him an example that it would be well to meditate upon and perhaps to follow later? We may at any rate suppose that this lesson was not lost on him. What is certain is that on the authority of an acute observer who was his confidant, Alexander only brought back from this intimate and prolonged intercourse with Napoleon an impression of fear and mistrust, founded upon a very correct estimate of his character.[1]

The conditions of peace once settled and the ground fixed, it only remained to find the means of carrying them out, to arrange the manner of proceeding in order to mask in some measure in the eyes of the world the suddenness of this prodigious change. It was agreed between the two emperors that this coalition for war should be presented to Europe under the form of steps in favour of peace. The two sovereigns were simultaneously to offer their mediation, one to England, the other to Turkey, and as they foresaw that this mediation would not be accepted, they were next to call upon the states of Europe to join their league, which would allow of their procuring advantages at the expense of those that were refractory.

Such was the spirit which dictated the famous stipulations of

[1] 'Correspondence of Prince Czartorisky with Alexander,' published by Ch. de Mazade.

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Tilsit. The part of the treaty which was to be made public, first settled the boundaries of the new kingdom of Prussia. Napoleon, 'for the sake of his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias,' consented to *restore* to the King of Prussia his provinces situated on the right side of the Elbe, except, however, the Polish provinces, which were given to Saxony after deducting domains estimated at twenty-six millions, of which Napoleon had already disposed in favour of his generals. He considered himself as the legitimate possessor of the Prussian states, and thus became the benefactor of the king to whom he deigned to leave anything. This clause, so humiliating in form and so hard in substance, deprived King Frederick William of more than four millions of his subjects out of nine. He tried in vain to make Napoleon adopt more moderate views, by endeavouring to prove his right and sincerity in the affair of the violation of Anspach. In this he showed that he little knew his adversary, for he could do nothing more dangerous to his interests than to prove that he had been right. If, in fact, justice was on his side, what was this conquest but brigandage? The beautiful Queen of Prussia committed the same error, when in her despair she appealed to the chivalrous feelings of the man, who had so cruelly insulted her in his bulletins. Napoleon himself related with coarse insinuations, the useless efforts she made to move him. The only concession he made was to offer her a rose. 'At least with Magdeburg,' said the queen, in supplication. 'I beg your Majesty to observe,' he harshly replied, 'that it is I who offer it, and you who receive it.'

The treaty next stipulated the double offer of mediation with England and Turkey, and Alexander engaged to withdraw his troops immediately from Moldavia and Wallachia till the conclusion of a definite arrangement. Napoleon had introduced this last clause more out of respect for himself than out of consideration for the Porte, for he had promised Alexander that *in any case* these two principalities should be ceded to him. Moreover, a revolution had just broken out at Constantinople, as if to offer him the pretext that he needed, and relieve him

even from scruples. The unfortunate Selim, who at his instigation had thrown himself into this fatal war, had been dethroned and imprisoned by the janissaries, in their jealousy of the troops armed and equipped in European costumes, which he had organized by Napoleon's advice. This providential event was supposed to free the Emperor of the French from all his engagements towards Turkey. The treaty stated, lastly, the solemn recognition of the kings of Naples and of Holland, of the Confederation of the Rhine, and of Jérôme, as King of Westphalia. This kingdom was to be formed partly of the spoils of Prussia on the left bank of the Elbe, and partly with Hesse-Cassel.

To this treaty, which was to be made public immediately, were added first some additional articles, and then a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, all to remain secret, and of which we do not even now possess the authentic text, though we know the substance. The articles stipulated the cession to France of the Ionian Isles, of the mouths of the Cattaro, the recognition of Joseph as King of Sicily, an indemnity to be furnished by Napoleon to King Ferdinand, such as the Balearic Isles or Candia. The treaty of alliance anticipated the case of the non-acceptance by England and Turkey of the mediation that was about to be proposed to them. If, as there was every reason to believe, England replied by a refusal, the two powers would immediately put half their forces in common, they would send a summons to the three courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon, and this would in all probability permit Russia to lay hands on Finland, and France to invade Portugal. With regard to the Court of Vienna, they did not call upon her so imperiously to pronounce, but they engaged 'to use every effort with her.' If, on her side, the Porte did not accept the offer of mediation, they would withdraw from the yoke of the Turks all the Ottoman provinces, *except Constantinople and Roumelia*. For England the refusal implied war with the whole of Europe, for Turkey the division and total overthrow of her rule.[1]

[1] Garden, *Histoire des Traités*, vol. x.; Bignon, *Histoire diplomatique*; De Clerck, *Recueil des Traités*, etc.

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Were there in the interview of Tilsit, besides those stipulations the authenticity of which is indisputable, other contingent and verbal conventions relative to the two questions which had for so long occupied Napoleon's mind—I mean those of Rome and Spain? The fact is probable enough as far as Spain is concerned, though we cannot positively affirm it. As the family of the Bonapartes had been substituted on so many thrones for that of the Bourbons, and were reigning even in countries which had never been governed by the latter, it is not very probable that Napoleon concealed from Alexander his intention of connecting Spain with his system, and of establishing a fresh family pact between the nations of Western Europe. With regard to the temporal sovereignty of the popes, it may be said at that time to have counted for almost nothing in Europe, especially in the eyes of a schismatical emperor; it could create no difficulty between the two states, and it would have been a superfluous precaution to try to obtain the consent of a sovereign for whom it had no interest.

The immense work which had just been sketched out at Tilsit, in reality only rested on hypothesis. It supposed that the Emperor Alexander would consider himself bound by eternal oaths towards a man who never kept one. It supposed that this young sovereign, who had only been momentarily drawn along by the magnificent advantages that were insured him, was for ever converted, touched by grace like St. Paul at Damascus; that he had put off the old man, forgotten his past, his ideas, his sympathies, and had suddenly changed his nature, his character, and even his country, in order to become the blind slave of a policy that he had hitherto defied. It supposed that Napoleon would be faithful to his word, that he would fulfil promises that were partly verbal, that he would never repent of having concluded a dupe's bargain. It supposed, in short, that the European nations would remain quiet and contented spectators of this arbitrary upsetting of their institutions, of their habits, of their national ties, of their ancient traditions; that they would be willing to be instruments of their own oppression, that when once the armies were destroyed and

the governments overthrown, everything was done, and that there was no need to pay heed to anything beyond. Public opinion, moral force, patriotic sentiments, national pride, popular traditions, love of liberty, none of these were supposed to exist. In blotting out the old geographical boundaries, they thought they had done away with nationalities, and Europe was nothing more in the eyes of her rulers than a mass of inert matter, capable of being moulded into any form they might choose to give.

Never did European liberty seem to be more urgently threatened; never did the Cæsarism which Napoleon had attempted to revive by the most insane anachronism, look more likely to consolidate itself than at this moment, when it made its appearance in the world, supported on the one hand by the Muscovite Colossus, on the other by our unprecedented military power. It might have been thought that affairs were in a desperate state, that everything was lost; and yet these gigantic plans, this triumphant conception, this formidable league, was only a bugbear, a vision, a chimera. Napoleon had done no more at Tilsit than prepare the elements of fresh rivalry. He had raised up, and strengthened with his own hands a more formidable antagonist for himself than any other, because it was placed beyond his reach. In each clause of this peace was hidden a clause of war. This despiser of ideology had only established at Tilsit what he himself contemptuously termed 'a fancy policy.' He had come there to deceive; he went away the dupe of his own avidity, rather than of Alexander's duplicity. He had cynically betrayed his old and faithful allies; he only brought away a doubtful and short-lived friendship. In this he did not act under the pressure of an imperious necessity, but of his own free will, with perfect consciousness of what he was doing, and only urged on by a frenzy of ambition. We have no need of any other judge than himself to determine the political value of these incautious stipulations. 'Wallachia and Moldavia,' he wrote to Alexander, February 28, 1811, 'form a third of Turkey in Europe. This is an acquisition which deprives Turkey of all her strength, and

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we may say, *destroys this empire, my oldest ally*. . . . Out of pure friendship for your Majesty, I have recognised the union of those fine countries; but, if *I had not confidence* in the continuation of your friendship, *several very disastrous campaigns would not have induced France to see her most ancient ally despoiled.*' What could he say more severe on himself? To sacrifice an ally, and give two provinces in exchange for a friendship—the friendship of a king — was certainly novel in the annals of diplomacy. 'I have consented,' he continued, 'to your Majesty's keeping Finland, which is a third of Sweden, and which is so important a province to your Majesty, that after this union Sweden cannot be said to exist, since Stockholm is the extremity of the kingdom. Nevertheless, Sweden was also, in spite of the false policy of her king, *one of the oldest allies of France.*'

Lastly, let us see what he says about the possibility, so much contested, of reconstituting the kingdom of Poland, and the motives which led him to abandon that nation, which was also a natural ally of France. 'The ears of your Majesty are wearied with calumnious reports. I want, it is said, to re-establish Poland. *I could have done it at Tilsit.* Twelve days after the battle of Friedland, I might have been at Wilna . . . I could have done it in 1800, at the time that the Russian troops were engaged against the Porte. *I could still do it, at the present moment.*' This was, as he himself said, all that he had done; this was the sacrifice of pride, of honour, of integrity, that he had imposed upon himself, and to what end? For what hope? Without compensation, without guarantee, without any other return than Alexander's *friendship*,—nay, less even than that—the promise of his friendship! It may be maintained theoretically that the engagements entered into at Tilsit were reciprocal. But practically this reciprocity vanishes, for Napoleon's bonds were to be met immediately; those of Alexander fell due at a future and indefinite epoch. One gave, the other promised to do, according to the old formula of *do ut facies*, eternal source of deception. If Napoleon did not see all the disadvantage of such a part, he must have been blinded by an inconceivable

fit of infatuation or passion. The truth is, he believed himself not to be gaining a friendship, but procuring an accomplice! He believed that he had completely subdued the enthusiastic Alexander, forgetting that this enthusiasm had already burned upon more than one altar. This cold, calculating man had his hour of dupery, and in this hour he had adopted the policy of sentiment. The schemer for once in his life had played the part of Don Quixote, and, as a natural consequence, his first impulse after signing the treaty of Tilsit was to infringe it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE POLICY OF TILSIT. CONQUEST AND OPPRESSION OF THE NEUTRAL STATES. ORIGIN OF THE WAR WITH SPAIN. (*August—October*, 1807.)

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NAPOLEON returned from Tilsit invested with a kind of European dictatorship. All the great states had been successively vanquished, weakened, and disarmed. Austria had lost a fourth of her territory after Austerlitz; Prussia had been almost annihilated at Jena; Russia alone remained, but she had passed under the yoke, and had accepted the condition of a complaisant auxiliary in the policy that she had so vehemently combated. The whole Continent trembled before Napoleon. Never in modern times had any sovereign had so colossal a power at his disposal. Louis XIV had appeared upon the scene of the world surrounded by more pomp and grandeur, but he had never attained this giddy height; he had never united in his hands such an accumulation of military force. In this brilliant success, which had just thrown so much lustre over the name of Napoleon, there had doubtless been many surprises, much transitory violence done to the nature of things. The results obtained were more apparent than real: considered calmly, they seemed to defy human reason, to contradict all the laws of history; but the germs of dissolution which they bore in themselves were as yet hidden from all eyes, and what struck the sight was only the gigantic proportions of a domination that

had neither limit nor precedent. Men asked themselves in anxiety what use Napoleon would make of it. Was not this incontestable omnipotence sufficient at last to appease his insatiable spirit? Would he know how to restrain himself, to be moderate, to be contented with ruling by influence, instead of subduing by force? Was it not time to let his exhausted soldiers rest? to think of improving the numerous institutions which had been improvised, with feverish haste, in an hour of extremity? to repair the evils of war? to try the power of gentleness and magnanimity over men? Would he not have, in the course of his sanguinary career, one moment of freedom from care? one instant of enjoyment of his own fortune, in return for the unheard-of favours that she had heaped upon him?

These hopes, which at that time began to dawn on many minds, were very quickly crushed. Napoleon had not travelled the distance which separates Paris from the town of Tilsit, where he had lavished so much flattery on Alexander, before, impatient to profit by this powerful alliance, he turned his face towards the feeble states which had hitherto remained neutral, and whom the submission of the great powers had just placed at his mercy. It was from Dresden that he wrote summonses to these unfortunate governments, which were now without defence. He longed to force them to quit the inoffensive position, in which they had sought safety. War with England, or war with France, such was the fearful alternative that he offered them. Either involved their ruin. In the impossibility of resisting him, it may be supposed that their first impulse would be to throw themselves into the arms of Napoleon, for he had only to extend his hand to destroy them, while England could only reach them through their commerce and their colonies; but the examples of Holland, of Switzerland, of Genoa, of Italy were there to tell them what Napoleon did to his allies. This imperious injunction only left them in reality the choice of suicide. The most important of these states was Denmark, whose comparatively large fleet and strong maritime positions Napoleon resolved to make use of against England. Next came

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Portugal, the states of the Pope, and lastly, that kingdom of Etruria which Napoleon had sold, but never delivered, to the house of Spain in exchange for Louisiana, after having extorted it from the house of Austria. His resolutions were more settled as far as these three states were concerned, than with regard to Denmark, which was to a certain degree protected by distance. He determined purely and simply to appropriate them to himself, making, however, the necessary transitions.

Of all the European nations, the Portuguese had been the least mixed up in the quarrels of the Continent. They only aspired to live in peace, to develope their commercial resources, and to exchange their wines and colonial produce for the manufactures with which England furnished them. Nevertheless this pacific attitude had not preserved them from Napoleon's violence. As early as 1801, the First Consul, in order to compel the Portuguese to close their ports against the English, had drawn Spain into declaring war on them; and not only had they been obliged to yield to this unreasonable demand, but they had also had to concede the province of Olivença to Spain, and to pay us a sum of twenty-five millions. Later, in the month of March, 1804, at the time of the renewal of hostilities with England after the rupture of the treaty of Amiens, the First Consul had by a regular treaty (signed March 19) restored to Portugal, for a sum of sixteen millions, the right of opening her ports during the whole length of the war. He had solemnly recognised her neutrality. Our relations with the Portuguese at that time rested upon this treaty. They had scrupulously observed the burdensome conditions; they had never given us a single reason for complaint, and relying upon our plighted word, they believed that they were safe from all ulterior persecution.

This was their position when Napoleon's sudden summons fell upon them like a thunderbolt. What he wanted was not to obtain from the Portuguese such or such concessions; it was to take their fleet, their riches, their territory. We see, in fact, that at the outset he wrote to Talleyrand to inform the Portuguese that their ports must be closed to the English, 'in default

of which, Napoleon would declare war, and confiscate the English merchandise.'[1] But he almost immediately changed his mind, for he was perfectly sure that Portugal would agree to his demands, however iniquitous they might be. He required therefore not only that the Portuguese should close their ports to England, but that they should declare war on her; besides the confiscation of English merchandise, he demanded that of all property belonging to the English. These hard conditions were to be accepted without hesitation in the shortest possible delay; and, as he foresaw that they would be disputed before they were submitted to, as he even desired that they should be disputed, in order to have a pretext for invading Portugal, before he had received a word in reply, he organized, under the name of *Corps d'observation de la Gironde*, an army of twenty-five thousand men, formed from the legions which he had left in Brittany and Normandy. These troops were to take possession of this kingdom, under the command of Junot, his former ambassador to Portugal (Aug. 2, 1807). At the same time he sent the regent of the kingdom a formal demand, couched in terms so vague and mild that its aim appeared rather to lull than to induce him to take any decided course of action. Whatever measures the prince might adopt, his fate was already settled. Napoleon was only uncertain about one thing, and that was the way in which he would dispose of Portugal after he had seized it; but his uncertainty was not to last long.

His ideas on this subject were very soon simplified by the immoderate desire which he had conceived of retaking the kingdom of Etruria from Spain. This cession of Tuscany to the house of Bourbon, it is true, had never been anything more than fictitious and nominal on the part of Napoleon. He had never ceased to keep a garrison there, and to command through his generals. During the war against Prussia and Russia he had been compelled to withdraw his troops, in order to send them to other points, and the Queen of Etruria, who had become the regent since the death of her husband, abandoned, without means of defence, and reduced to plead her

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand: Dresden, July 18th, 1807.

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qualification of a neutral power, had been obliged to allow English commerce to enter the port of Leghorn. Napoleon took care not to lose so fine an opportunity of confiscating at once English merchandise and the kingdom. He ordered Prince Eugène to march a corps of six thousand men upon Leghorn,[1] to seize the English and their property. The regent was only informed of the expedition a month later, September 16th, when it was all ended. Napoleon had only acted, he said, 'out of vigilance for her interests, and against the common enemy;'[2] he had had no other motive than that of preserving Leghorn for his sister and cousin. But he did not tell her to what an extent he carried this solicitude; it went much further still! The occupation of Leghorn had suddenly opened his eyes. He could not possibly do without Tuscany. He required it to complete his possessions in Italy; in short, it was absolutely indispensable. And only a few days after he had tranquillized his good sister, the regent of Etruria, September 25, 1807, he wrote to Duroc: '*We must do away with this deformity in the peninsula of Italy!*' But how was he, the creator of the deformity, to perform this difficult operation without deeply wounding Spain, with whom he still wished to be on good terms? The means were easy; he would indemnify her with Portugal, for which a use was thus found. And he charged Duroc to propose to Izquierdo, the agent of the Spanish court, 'that a part of Portugal should go to the Queen of Etruria, another to the Prince of Peace. . . . . I should like Izquierdo,' he added, 'to offer me some plan of this kind.'[3]

There was another deformity in Italy which shocked still more Napoleon's susceptible eyes—I mean the Roman states. These provinces, as he wrote to Eugène, on the 5th of August,

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, August 16.

[2] Napoleon to Marie-Louise, regent of Etruria, September 16.

[3] Napoleon to Duroc, September 25. The first idea of the treaty of Fontainebleau, has been invariably attributed to Izquierdo. To any one who at all understands the character and policy of Napoleon, this supposition appears absurd, and this quotation shows how impossible it is to maintain it.

impeded his communications with the kingdom of Naples. This was the principal grievance which Napoleon had against the Pope; but in default of this, which it was difficult for him to avow, he had plenty of others to adduce, for he could always find accusations against those whom he had resolved to ruin. How things were changed since the time of the Coronation and the Concordat! Between the Holy See and Napoleon there was henceforward only an exchange of insults and threats, on the one side, and honeyed but envenomed words on the other—the just consequence of that hypocritical pact in which, under the mask of religion, both had sought for the gratification of their covetous desires. To the disappointment which he had experienced with regard to the Legations, to the deception, to the usurpation of every kind, of which he had had to complain on the part of Napoleon, to the occupation of Ancona and of Civita Vecchia, to the seizure of the pontifical revenues, to the confiscation of the duchies of Benevento and Ponte Corvo, Pius VII had replied by making use of his spiritual arms; he had refused to extend the Italian Concordat to Venice; refused to annul Jérôme's first marriage; refused to enter into the Jesuit alliance, and to confirm certain nominations of bishops. He had avenged himself after the manner of the weak, by intrenching himself in passive resistance, without however outstepping his traditional and pontifical right.

Napoleon was all the more exasperated against him because he felt his utter powerlessness to force him in this position. And in the summons which he sent him, he thought fit to add a demand, for which he believed he should have the support of public opinion. He ordered Talleyrand to require from the Court of Rome that the number of the French cardinals in the councils in which the affairs of the Church were treated, should henceforth be proportional to that of the Roman cardinals.

'Talleyrand will add,' said Napoleon, 'that it is time to put an end to the petty quarrels which they are continually trying to pick with me; that I am greatly irritated and indignant at their threats of excommunication and of declaring me dethroned,

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that there only remains for them to put me in a monastery, *and have me whipped like Louis le Débonnaire:* that if they wish this to end, they have only to give plenipotentiary powers to the legate, who is in Paris; that if they do not accept this proposition, they must cease all correspondence, and the threats which I despise.' (July 22.)

As Talleyrand was known to soften the form of the diplomatic despatches which as minister he was obliged to transmit to foreign sovereigns, Napoleon enjoined Prince Eugène to communicate to the Pope a letter, supposed to be confidential, in which the Emperor poured out to his adopted son all his resentment against the Court of Rome. This letter, which was still more violent than the preceding one, was intended to frighten those whom it could not convince. Napoleon had obtained everything by terrifying the old men who directed the councils of the Church; he had seen them on so many occasions so feeble and so miserable, that he believed he was sure of bringing them into complete subjection through fear. He did not know how tenacious a priest is. 'My son,' he said, in this long diatribe, which seemed to be breathless with anger, 'I have seen in a letter of His Holiness, which he certainly did not write to me, that he threatens me. Does he think, then, that the rights of the throne are less sacred in the eyes of God than those of the tiara? There were kings before there were popes. They will, they say, publish the harm that I do to religion. *The fools! they do not know that there is not a corner of the world in which I have not done more good to religion than the Pope does it harm!* . . . . If the Pope were to commit such an act of folly, he would cease to be the Pope in my eyes; I should consider him as *Antichrist* . . . . If he were to do this, I should cut off my people from all communication with Rome, *and I should establish a police there* . . . . For the last two years the Court of Rome has preached rebellion . . . . . What does Pius VII want to do, by denouncing me to Christendom? Interdict *my thrones*, excommunicate me? Does he think that the arms will fall from the hands of my soldiers? *And would he put a dagger into the hands of my people to stab me?* The

popes, in their fury, have preached this infamous doctrine. Do they take me for Louis Débonnaire? . . . . The present Pope is too powerful. Priests were not made to govern. Let them imitate St. Peter, St. Paul, the Apostles. . . . . Truly, I begin to blush at all I have suffered from the Court of Rome, and perhaps the time is not far distant, if they continue to disturb my States, when I shall only recognize the Pope *as bishop of Rome* . . . . . I shall unite the Gallican, Italian, German, and Polish churches, *into a council to arrange my affairs without the Pope, and to protect my peoples from the pretensions of the priests of Rome.*'

After this shower of invectives and accusations that were singular enough in the mouth of a man who had himself re-established all the rights of which he complained, came the ultimatum which Napoleon intended to offer to the Court of Rome. He repeated his demand with regard to the number of the cardinals, which was to be in proportion to the population; he required that the Italian Concordat should be extended to Venice; lastly, he called upon the Pope to confirm the nomination of the bishops, letting it be clearly seen that a schism would be the inevitable consequence of a longer resistance to these commands.[1] This ultimatum, however, only concerned the spiritual sovereign; there was another for the temporal prince, of which Napoleon had already more than once informed the Court of Rome, and which he renewed in not less peremptory terms, viz. a request that he should closely ally himself with France, and drive her enemies out of the pontifical territory. This outburst of anger was in reality only a stratagem. With Rome, as with Portugal, he had exaggerated the complaints and swelled the list of requirements, in order that a refusal to any one of them might permit him to act as he chose. He was seeking not satisfaction, but a pretext for seizing the Papal States. Napoleon's threats produced the terror that he expected in the Holy See. The Pope hastened to name Cardinal Litta his negotiator at Paris. But the Emperor, who had decided beforehand to regard this as a bad choice, replied

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, July 22, 1807.

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to this step by informing the Court of Rome that he would only treat with Cardinal de Bayanne, and by announcing that a longer hesitation would force him to unite the three provinces of Ancona, Urbino, and Camerino[1] to the kingdom of Italy. It was just these provinces which only a short time before he had mentioned to Eugène as indispensable to his communications with Naples. His opinion on this point had, it appears, been strengthened. The nomination of Cardinal de Bayanne, which the Pope hastened to agree to in the most affectionate manner,[2] in order to appease him, did not for an instant stop the fulfilment of a prophecy that was made with so much certainty. Almost at the same time that the cardinal left Rome to go to Fontainebleau, General Lemarrois took possession of the provinces of the Holy See in the name of the Emperor. This invasion, like that of Leghorn and of Portugal, was only the prelude of measures infinitely graver and more decisive; but as Napoleon wrote about this time, '*A thing must be done in order to own that one thought of it.*'

While these preliminary measures were being executed against the victims of the reconciliation between France and Russia, at Tilsit Napoleon saw a prey on which he set the greatest value escape him just as he was extending his hand to seize it. The English had captured the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, after having bombarded the town, and this event had produced an immense sensation in Europe. How England had obtained a knowledge of the secret stipulations of Tilsit is not yet known. When the Government was questioned on the subject in Parliament, they resolutely refused to say from whence they had derived it, though they maintained the accuracy of their information. There are strong reasons for thinking that this valuable communication was made to them by Sir Robert Wilson, who had just served for two years in the Russian army. It is not even impossible that they had received it from Alexander himself, who, if we may believe an assertion contained in the *Mémoires* of General Bontourlin, had remained at

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, August 28.

[2] Pope Pius VII to Napoleon, September 11, 1807.

heart attached to the English alliance. What is certain is that they had learned, it matters little by what means, that Napoleon had resolved with the consent of Alexander to seize the maritime resources of Denmark, in order to employ them against their country. 'His Majesty,' said a declaration of the British Cabinet, dated 25th September, 1807, 'has received *the most certain information* with regard to the determination of the present head of the French nation to invade Holstein and force Denmark to close the passages of the Sound to British navigation.'[1] The English ministers could hardly have been better informed had they read Napoleon's letters to Bernadotte.

Power was no longer in the hands of Fox's feeble successors. The want of capacity that the Grenville Cabinet had shown in the conduct of the war, and their dissensions with the king with regard to the concessions to be made to the Irish who were serving in the army, had brought Pitt's friends back to office, and the new ministry was led by Canning and Castlereagh. These two statesmen were certainly not remarkable for their scrupulousness; but when once in possession of power, which they owed to their complaisance towards the king, they undoubtedly displayed more energy, decision, and intelligence than their predecessors. They understood the danger which threatened their country, and the necessity of a prompt determination, if they would frustrate the plans of their powerful adversaries. The peril was in fact imminent. Denmark was incapable of resisting the summonses of Napoleon, which became every day more urgent. Bernadotte was on the frontier of Holstein with his army. 'Denmark must declare war on England, or I declare war on Denmark;' wrote Napoleon to him, the 2nd August, 1807; 'in the latter case you will have to take possession of the whole of the Danish continent.' On the 17th of August this notice was changed to a formal order to march.[2] The unfortunate regent, threatened with the loss of half his states, had long before resolved, or at any rate promised to yield, for, as early as the 31st of July, Napoleon

[1] 'Annual Register.' State Papers.

[2] Napoleon to Berthier, August 17, 1807.

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complained, in a letter to Talleyrand, of the nonfulfilment of the *promises* of Denmark. But that prince knew to what hard tyranny he was about to submit, he justly feared the retaliation of England, and tried to gain time by delays.

Unfortunately for the intrepid little Danish nation, sacrificed to quarrels to which they would gladly have remained strangers, their situation admitted of no middle term, and the moment that one of the belligerent powers violated their neutrality, it was impossible for the other to recognise it. The Danish navy by itself could not annoy England, but directly it was to be added to the immense means which were already at Napoleon's disposal, and especially when all the efforts of the Continent were united with his, it became a dangerous weapon. It consisted at that time of twenty ships of the line, sixteen frigates, nine brigs, and a large number of gun-boats manned with good crews; these vessels would have been such a strong reinforcement to Napoleon's navy, that at a given moment they might have turned the scales in his favour. These are circumstances which must not be lost sight of, if we would judge impartially of the violence of the English intervention at Copenhagen. The English Government forestalled Napoleon, they bombarded Copenhagen, after having offered to the Danish nation to defend them, to guarantee to them their states and their colonies, and to place at their disposal 'every means of naval, military, and pecuniary defence.'[1] 'Foreseeing,' to use the expression of one of their admirals, 'the crimes that France proposed to commit by means of the Danish navy,[2] they vainly insisted on the fleet being confided to them as a deposit, which they promised to restore, as they did that of Portugal.' In the eyes of Europe they had all the odium of this expedition, which caused a great sensation; but Europe was not then aware of what has since been known, viz. that the Danish fleet, at the time of its capture was on the point of passing into the hands of Napoleon, to whom the regent of Denmark had already made promises of submission.

[1] British Declaration, September 25.

[2] Admiral Gambier's Proclamation, August 16. 'Annual Register.'

The almost immediate effect of this event was that Alexander's derisive offer of mediation with England was made void. The English Cabinet had already replied to it by asking, through Lord Leveson Gower, for information concerning the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit. This demand, which touched the principal point of the question, showed Alexander that he had been discovered, and it compelled him to throw off the mask by a declaration of war, which at last placed things in their true light. The truth was, that since Tilsit Alexander had been the disguised servitor of French policy, and for England open hostility was preferable to a feigned friendship. By this rupture Alexander was called upon to fulfil the engagements that he had made in his interview with Napoleon; it was now Napoleon's turn to carry out those which he had entered into with Alexander.

But Napoleon had no sooner taken leave of the Czar than he repented of the promises he had made. As was usual with him in all his diplomatic transactions, he endeavoured to take back what he had given. Turkey had, contrary to all expectation, accepted his offer of mediation, which had at once removed the possibility that had been anticipated at Tilsit of a war, to be followed by a division of the Ottoman empire. By this acceptance, which was a skilful stroke on the part of the Porte, Napoleon was called upon to require, according to the formal promise which accompanied the offer of mediation, the preliminary evacuation of the principalities by the Russian troops; but, as he had verbally engaged with Alexander not to insist upon this evacuation, he found himself asked to perform two contradictory promises, and his deception was laid bare. To the difficulties of this situation, which was embarrassing for a man who boasted so loudly of his honesty, were added the remonstrances of Sebastiani, who pointed out with great force how impolitic it would be to allow Turkey to fall under Russian domination. For all these reasons Napoleon regretted to have gone so far with Alexander, and as he could not venture to retract promises which were too recent to be denied, he endeavoured to elude their fulfilment.

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He had sent Savary to St. Petersburg with instructions to amuse the Czar with fine promises, and to turn against Sweden Alexander's impatience and avidity to get possession of the Turkish provinces. But Finland appeared to him a present of no value, and the more they tried to draw his attention to this side, the more energetically he claimed what had been promised him on the other. He dwelt, and not without reason, on his own fidelity in fulfilling his engagements, and the increasing irritation of the old Russian party, to whom he needed to offer great advantages, in order to obtain pardon for an alliance that was really very unpopular in Russia, as was proved by the contemptuous coldness with which our ambassador was received in Russian society. Napoleon, without going so far as to wound Alexander, still tried to obtain from him at any rate a temporary evacuation of Wallachia and Moldavia.

In order to influence the resolutions of the Czar, Napoleon made use of the military occupation which he had maintained in Prussia. The treaty of Tilsit had stipulated that the Prussian states should be evacuated after the payment of the contributions of war, but the amount of these contributions had not been named. Napoleon fixed it himself, and so high that for a country exhausted and ruined as Prussia then was, it was nothing less than rapacity. The sum total of these contributions, of which the last instalment only remained to be paid, amounted to 601,200,000 francs. Independent of these enormous sums for the time, Prussia had furnished a large ransom in objects of art and requisitions of every kind.[1] He took advantage of her impossibility to set herself free, to make her maintain his troops for more than a year. The presence of these troops on Prussian territory was moreover, a permanent threat to Russia. Very soon he did not hesitate to give the Czar clearly to understand that he should only leave him the principalities on condition that he himself kept Silesia. Such was the strange

[1] Visconti's report shows that the objects of art collected in the north of Germany were classified in the following manner:—Pictures, 350; manuscripts, 282; statues, 50; bronzes, 192, etc.

recantation which Caulaincourt received orders to make the Czar agree to. Caulaincourt had, like Savary, figured in the affair of the Duc d'Enghien, though he had, it is true, taken a much less prominent part, having only supported Ordiner's movement upon Ettenheim; but it was still a stroke of diabolical irony on the part of Napoleon, to force these two men upon the young Czar, as if to remind him of the utter powerlessness of his will. Caulaincourt, without disputing the verbal promises of Tilsit, was to represent them merely as provisions that were by no means obligatory; and with regard to the evacuation of Silesia, he had orders to pretend that he could see nothing more in it than a natural equivalent for that of the principalities. Napoleon consented to abandon them to Alexander, provided that Alexander consented to leave him this last shred of the Prussian spoils.

With these first clouds floating over the Russian alliance, Napoleon's desire to induce Austria to make a breach with England, or at least to join the continental blockade, the necessity, in short, of preventing any diversion on her part till he had completed the numerous enterprises that he had begun in the West, compelled him to give some satisfaction to the Court of Vienna, in order to obtain her acquiescence. After having for a moment hesitated between conciliation and violence, for he was on the point of treating Austria with as little consideration as Denmark, he attained his end by restoring Braunau to her, a strong place which he had kept after the occupation of the mouth of the Cattaro by the Russians. He had, moreover, no longer any pretext for refusing it, since the Russians had just given up to us both Corfu and the mouths of the Cattaro. An exchange of territory on the banks of the Isonzo, amicably made between the kingdoms of Italy and Austria, achieved the tranquillization of the Cabinet of Vienna, who greatly feared lest their project of mediation, proposed after the battle of Eylau, should bring misfortunes on them. In this the court was not mistaken, and Napoleon had by no means pardoned them; but it sufficed for the present that he obtained the adhesion of Austria to the continental blockade, and

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her neutrality in the complicated affairs in which he was engaged.

Such was the spectacle which Europe presented during the three months that followed the interview at Tilsit. No strength could resist the two colossal empires which had joined hands over the ruin of the old great continental powers. All the intermediary states were paralysed by powerlessness or terror, and our soldiers were marching everywhere to destroy the last vestige of independence among the nations whose weakness or position had hitherto protected them from the storm. The name of *corps d'observation*, which Napoleon invariably gave to the different armies which he sent against Etruria, the states of Rome, or Portugal, seemed to say that he did not think these states worthy of a declaration of war. Their occupation was simply a police measure. The Danish nation alone had prevented imminent invasion by throwing themselves into our arms after the catastrophe of Copenhagen. He could no longer seize their navy, but he used their misfortunes to justify enterprises which he had commenced long before the issue of the English expedition; and even the conquest of Portugal was represented as a simple return for the bombarding of the Danish capital. In a correspondence which the *Moniteur* published, as sent from Lisbon, the Portuguese themselves asked to be seized, in order to avenge Denmark. 'We wish to join our efforts with those of the Continent,' said this fellow-countryman of Camöens. 'The outrages done to all sovereigns in the atrocious expedition of Copenhagen will justify our war. . . . . Hatred to England is the feeling of the present generation!'[1] The Portuguese little suspected that they were so impatient to sacrifice themselves to the cause of the continental blockade. Besides these various operations, Napoleon was preparing in the most profound secresy two expeditions, one against Sardinia, the other against Sicily,—that indispensable gem in Joseph's crown. Both were doomed to the discreditable failure which fell to the lot of all his naval

[1] *Moniteur* of October 25, 1807.

enterprises; but the success of these plans appeared certain, and when once they were realized, what obstacle could henceforth stop him?

It was a singular fact, however, and one worthy of remark, that by the side of these inoffensive states, against whom Napoleon had not a single legitimate grievance, and whom he only attacked from ambition, there was another which had given him just reason to complain, after having been, it is true, driven to extremities by a long series of insult and bad treatment, and Napoleon, instead of punishing her, seemed to have quite forgotten it; he even treated her with a great deal of kindness and consideration. This state was Spain, and the subject of complaint was the proclamation of the Prince of Peace at the time of Jena of an attempt at revolt, disavowed almost as soon as conceived, but still certain although it was disguised in obscure circumlocutions. Napoleon, who was then occupied with other plans, had accepted without demur the explanations that were given him, and had contented himself with requiring as a pledge of the future docility of Spain that La Romana's corps of occupation should be sent to the shores of the Baltic. Since then he had settled the affairs of the North, he had returned to Paris, and, contrary to all expectation, he had not recriminated. The Court of Spain, fearing one of those bursts of anger to which she was accustomed, had sent the Duke de Frias to congratulate and appease him. Napoleon gave him the warmest reception. Instead of complaining, he wrote to the King of Spain, on the 8th of September, thanking him for having always acted as a *faithful ally* of France. He informed him of his projects against Portugal, urged him to join us in forcing England into peace, but of the famous proclamation he did not say a word. This magnanimity was the more extraordinary because Napoleon had always treated Spain with pitiless brutality, even when he could upbraid her with no wrong. Now that he had really a right to complain, he held his tongue. He seemed either to wish to keep his grievance in reserve, or else not to remember it. What design did this silence cover? What interest had he in being generous? It is certain that this

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clemency was not natural to him, and that such a novel attitude clearly indicated that he was meditating some scheme affecting Spain.

What would this deeply meditated surprise be, and by what means would it be made? Napoleon himself did not as yet know, for he was not a man to bind himself beforehand by a fixed plan in an enterprise in which his ambition admitted no limit; but what he had irrevocably decided was, that he would do something. This plan was not so recent or so fresh as is generally thought. Napoleon had for a long time treated Spain as one of those miserable kingdoms in which the sovereign was nothing more than the agent of his own authority. It was no exaggeration, when in his opening address to the Legislative Body, on the 6th of August, 1807, he compared Spain to Holland, Switzerland, and the kingdoms of Italy and Naples. His encroachments on this unfortunate country had in fact begun long before the time that is ordinarily assigned to them. As early as the day after Jena, alluding to the reports that were current after the proclamation of the Prince of Peace, he wrote to Cambacérès: 'Where did you learn that Spain was joining the coalition? *All her strong places are in my hands.*' This was no doubt one of those gross exaggerations which he well knew how to make, but there was nevertheless some truth in it. Napoleon had vessels and soldiers in several ports of Spain, he was in communication with a great number of agents of the Spanish Government, and he thoroughly understood how to turn them to account.

Among the numerous questions that have been raised with regard to the origin of this obscure affair of Spain, there is one which French historians invariably decide in favour of Napoleon,—I mean of his pretended right to interfere in the peninsula. This right was founded, according to them, first, on the treachery of the Prince of Peace, and secondly, on what they term the necessity of making some decision with respect to Spanish decadence. It suffices, in order to show the worth of these assertions, to give a glance at Napoleon's former relations with the Court of Spain. Drawn into war against

England by a treaty wrested from a weak king, but in which a perfect reciprocity between the two states was at any rate stipulated, Spain had only found violence, spoliation, and nameless execrations in an alliance in which she had looked for protection and security. Duped in the affair of the kingdom of Etruria, in which she had received a fictitious state in exchange for a magnificent colony, plundered and robbed at the time of the treaty of Amiens, which cost her the Island of Trinidad in spite of the most stringent clauses of the alliance, publicly insulted in the person of her king, at the conclusion of the treaty of the six millions a month, she had again found herself engaged in a disastrous war, against her own will; she had lost her commerce and her colonies by it; she had heroically sacrificed her navy for us at Trafalgar. In return for so much submission and devotion, she had seen her king treated with the most sovereign contempt whenever he had attempted to offer any resistance to unjust demands. She had seen Napoleon dispose of all the resources of her kingdom; she had seen him drive the Spanish dynasty out of Naples, to give place to his brother Joseph, and that after having drawn them into his snares, and led them to revolt by dint of insult and exactions. But this was not all. After such cruel sufferings, after the sanguinary sacrifice of Trafalgar, and at the end of Napoleon's negotiations with Fox's cabinet, Spain suddenly learned that this perjured ally, trafficking in Spanish territory as if it had been his own property, had offered successively to England and Russia the cession of the Balearic Isles, as an indemnity for one of the princes whom he had despoiled. The measure of iniquity had long since been full, and it was after this last discovery that the Prince of Peace had thought that the right moment was come to shake off the yoke, by taking advantage of the opportunity which the war with Russia offered them. We must say it plainly; Manuel de Godoy's only error in this project of revolt was that of not having attempted it earlier, and especially in not having persevered in it at any cost; and if he was a traitor to any one, it was to his ruined country, sold and humiliated by the foreigner.

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So much for the right arising out of the pretended treachery of the Prince of Peace. As for that founded on the decline of Spain, by making Napoleon a sort of Providence sent to regenerate empires, it betokens such an amount of superstition in the writers who adduce it, that it requires a certain effort of patience seriously to discuss the facts upon which they base this abject theory of regeneration by servitude. That Spain was a monarchy that had declined since the time of Isabella and Charles V, would never be disputed by any one. The immense effort that Spain had made in the sixteenth century to rule Europe; the immoderate extent of her colonization, which had drained the mother country; and, more than all this, the iron yoke of the absolute power of Catholicism, personified in the Inquisition; the annihilation of the industrious Moors; the enormous number of monastic institutions—such were the evils of centuries which had prematurely checked the rise, at first so brilliant, of the Spanish nation. In spite of this, the philosophical spirit, which penetrated everywhere in the eighteenth century, ended by finding its way into Catholic Spain. It had for its instrument a bigoted but well-meaning king. The strict Charles III, influenced by an enlightened minister, M. d'Aranda, was seen to inaugurate in Spain an era of reforms and improvements. Clerical domination received a death-blow through the Jesuits; civil liberties were increased, and industry had revived. The elements of this happy revival had not ceased to exist in Spain, but the spectacle of the frightful convulsions which so quickly succeeded to the glorious dawn of the French Revolution, produced in that country, as in many others, a time of intermission and a sort of stupor, which was soon followed by war. To this war of alternate reverses and success, had succeeded an alliance, offensive and defensive, much more disastrous for Spain than continued hostilities; but it was especially from Bonaparte's accession to the Consulate that her misfortunes dated. It was he who was the principal cause of this returning declension, which historians venture to use as an argument in support of his usurpations. It was he who had twice driven Spain into a war which she repelled; he

who had brought ruin upon the commerce of Spain and her rising colonies; he who had exhausted the Spanish treasury by his exactions; he who had, in opposition to the advice of his own seamen, given the signal for the destruction of the Spanish navy, by sending it to the slaughter of Trafalgar; it was he, in short, who was the creator of the dissensions which began to agitate the peninsula. If the name of Manuel de Godoy was held in public execration, it was solely because he was believed to be the instrument and docile servitor of French policy, which he submitted to in fact, but execrating it; and if the popular imagination in quest of a hero was enamoured of the young Prince of Asturias, heir apparent to the Crown, it was because he was regarded as the natural enemy of this influence.

Were these, then, reasons why Napoleon was called upon to play the part of the regenerator of Spain? And suppose success had crowned his enterprise, what benefit could he confer on her? What was there so enviable in the régime that he had just given to France? How could he justify this strange metamorphosis of Cæsarism into the redemption of nations? Spain was certainly behind the epoch in enlightenment and material improvements, but though subject to the capricious régime of a king's good pleasure, she had not submitted to a despotism as degrading as that which weighed upon France. Her situation in this critical moment has generally been judged of by the scandalous reports of the court and the lying statistics which Napoleon had drawn up to justify his usurpation. But, even admitting these to be true, this was not the life of the whole country. Spain possessed very extensive provincial and municipal liberties, under protection of which a great number of prosperous and independent men could exist. Some of her provinces, like Navarre and the Basque provinces, were regular republics, voting their own taxes, and governing themselves. The authority of the king was somewhat absolute, but it was mild and tolerant; he did not bow before the law, but he respected traditions, and his faults were those of weakness and carelessness. The court was frivolous and corrupt, like a court of the old régime; but compared with the scandalous

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proceedings of the imperial court, even the *liaison* of the queen with Godoy, which has roused the indignation of the virtuous apologists of the empire, might pass for a model of patriarchal customs. Moreover, whatever may have been the corruption of the courtiers, the nation was honest and sound. A Spaniard commanded esteem in Europe for his courage, his sobriety, his fidelity to his word, and his susceptibility in everything touching his honour; he held an old-fashioned belief, but at any rate he had a belief. With a fund of such rare qualities, the nation was better able to teach the French, such as Napoleon had fashioned them, than the French were able to teach the Spaniards. The only gift which these strange missionaries of civilization could bring them, was the scourge of a foreign rule.

Let us abandon then the discreditable sophisms, which have too long served as an excuse for crimes of which we can only prevent a repetition by representing them in all their frightful reality. The same may be said of the stories invented by Napoleon, and since repeated by complacent apologists, to throw the responsibility of the beginning and after development of the affairs of Spain upon the secondary actors in this melancholy drama. In this, as in the catastrophe of Vincennes, and in all the actions of his life on which he feared to see thrown the avenging light of history, this great deceiver, the happy creator of his own legend, has endeavoured to heap up equivocal and contradictory statements. He even went so far, as we shall show, as to fabricate false documents, in order to escape from the severe judgments of the future, and the success of his historical fortifications, which is perhaps still more astonishing than that of his political and military stratagems, proves that he had not reckoned too much on the credulity of the human race. Napoleon wrote little, and for good reasons, about the affairs of Spain, but, on the other hand, he talked about them a good deal. In the voluminous collection of his notes, we only find a few pages relative to the sojourn of the dethroned sovereigns in France. In these, which are among his *observations upon the manuscript of St. Helena*, he endeavours to prove that he had an interest in causing Ferdinand VII and

his brother Don Carlos to be assassinated; by their death, he says, everything would have been terminated. He asserts that Talleyrand advised him to get rid of these two young princes, and he claims the merit of having rejected the counsel. He does not say a word about the origin of the war, but in his conversations, which he knew would be carefully gathered up by his attentive listeners, and which, in fact, became the source from whence historians have most commonly drawn their information, he is much more explicit.

In these talks, he distinctly ascribes to Talleyrand the first idea of invading Spain, just as he ascribed to him that of the assassination of the Duc d'Enghien. He said so to O'Meara, and he repeated it to Las Cases. 'It was Talleyrand,' said the Emperor, 'who pushed on the war with Spain, *though he was crafty enough to appear opposed to it in public.*'[1] This last expression is singularly characteristic. What! Talleyrand was crafty enough to drive Napoleon into committing this fatal act, and at the same time he had induced a belief in the public mind that he was opposed to it, and this under the eye of the imperial police? This was more than art,—it was witchcraft! Las Cases adds: 'And it was *out of spite* that Napoleon chose Valençay for Ferdinand's residence.' This fact is certainly not invented. The choice of Valençay, which belonged to Talleyrand, as a prison for the dethroned prince, has often been brought forward as a proof of the active assistance of this diplomatist in Napoleon's plans. We see by this what may be thought of it. It was one of those Mephistophelian tricks for which Napoleon had a predilection, an idea of the same kind that had suggested his sending Savary and Caulaincourt to Alexander; and if the choice of Valençay proves anything, it is rather in favour of Talleyrand than against him. It proves that Napoleon bore him ill-will for his opposition, and compromised him as a punishment. The present admirers of Napoleon, who are more cautious than their predecessors, would now wish that history should take no account of the different journals kept at St. Helena, nor of his daily conversations.

[1] *Mémorial* de Las Cases.

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No one has proved better than ourselves how full of lying statements these narrations are, but the stories are his own invention, and not those of his friends to whom he dictated them; they emanated from himself, they contain a notable portion of truth, for it is only by misrepresenting truth that skilful lies are framed; they reveal one of the most striking traits of his character, and they are the more worthy of discussion, because they are the first source of the falsehoods which have been commented upon and embellished. What, moreover, would become of the justice of history, if we are to pay no attention to the false witness which a man has left against himself and others? The striking harmony between the journals of Las Cases and O'Meara is an incontestable proof of the fidelity of the authors for every unprejudiced mind, but the formal confirmation which they have received by a recent publication,[1] no longer leaves any room for doubt. It is Napoléon himself who speaks in their narratives. They agree in substance, if not in form. The journal of Colonel Campbell, the English Commissioner to the island of Elba, contains exactly the same facts, sometimes even expressed in exactly the same terms. Here also, Napoleon ascribes to Talleyrand's influence the war with Spain, and the death of the Duc d'Enghien. 'Talleyrand,' he says, 'was out of favour, in consequence of the complaints of the kings of Bavaria and Würtemberg, from whom he had extorted large sums of money; but he continued to frequent the Emperor's soirées, and it was in order to regain his favour, that he proposed to him to take advantage of the dissensions that had broken out in Spain.' And he adds that Talleyrand often urged him 'to get rid of the Bourbons by assassinating them.'

This statement which, to say the least, appears at first sight very questionable, agrees in reality with an assertion contained in the unpublished *mémoires* of Cambacérès, that grotesque personage, who could never pardon Talleyrand his superiority and his raillery, the only authority that has yet been found for charging this statesman with the responsibility of the affair of

[1] Napoleon at Fontainebleau and Elba: Sir Neil Campbell's Journal.

Spain. In none of the contemporary documents do we find any trace of his active influence upon these events. He was a confidential but unofficial agent; and he only played a secondary and passive part. Talleyrand was in fact out of favour at this period, and that not in consequence of the complaints of foreign courts, but because, disgusted with an office in which Napoleon made use of his skill without ever following his advice, he had insisted on exchanging his title of minister of foreign affairs for that of *vice grand elector*. He had been succeeded in the ministry by Champagny, a much more docile instrument. It was through Champagny, his minister of foreign affairs, and Duroc, his confidential man, that Napoleon commenced the preliminary transactions which ended in the invasion of Spain. Talleyrand, attached to the court by his office of lord high chamberlain, accompanied Napoleon to Fontainebleau, and we see by Izquierdo's despatches that to a certain degree he was informed of the Emperor's plans, and that the Spanish agent endeavoured to make use of his supposed credit, but he only took part incidentally and by conversations in these preparatory measures. There is more. He was not even aware of their real aim. He believed that it was to obtain the province of the Ebro. He never touched on any other subject with Izquierdo.[1] All the decisive overtures were made by Duroc, who like Champagny, was an involuntary actor in the affair. During the whole of this period, up to the issue of the famous scenes of Bayonne, there was a complete interruption in the correspondence between Napoleon and Talleyrand. The first letter that the Emperor wrote him after he left the ministry was on the 25th of April, 1808, at which epoch everything was ended.

These are only suppositions; but when we reflect on the character and the turn of mind of these two men, on their historical antecedents and their respective temperaments, we ask ourselves how so improbable an accusation could have been

[1] The curious despatches of Izquierdo have been published with a number of other precious documents in the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution d'Espagne* de Llorente (Nellerto).

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believed without further proof than the assertion of a man who has in so many cases been detected of imposture? We ask how credence can have been gained for this story of Talleyrand's attaching himself to Napoleon, as his evil genius, in order to draw him step by step towards the abyss? Our object is not to rehabilitate the memory of this venal and versatile man, but to render to each his due, for that is the first duty of an impartial historian. For any one who is familiar with Napoleon's mind, with his manner of acting and of thinking, his disposition, his temperament, and the acts of his whole life, this assertion that in an affair of such importance, in an enterprise so vast, so perilous, so coolly premeditated, he was drawn along unwittingly, as it were, by bad counsel, is one of the most extraordinary ideas that can be conceived. It is he, the consummate dissembler; he who never took counsel of any one; who only unmasked his plans when they were complete; he, that connoisseur and master in treachery; he, the author of so many acts of perfidy, who represents himself as led astray and perverted by the immorality of his counsellors; who poses as the virtuous young man corrupted by evil communications! He brings forward an excuse, the benefit of which is generally only given to women and children, and it is accepted without examination, without any other guarantee than his word! Pardon has been easily granted to this innocent man, as if the illusion were possible; as if this odious machination did not bear even in the smallest details the stamp of his hand, the seal of his crafty mind; as if from each incident of this skilfully conducted intrigue, and from the very shadow of this dark ambush, there did not arise a cry, the supreme cry of evidence: *Tu es ille vir*,—'It is thou that has done it!'

Napoleon was the less likely to be influenced by Talleyrand in this affair, as he had never taken any account of his counsels on a number of other occasions, in which he had the greatest interest in following them. We have seen him, especially at the time of Austerlitz, when the favour that he showed Talleyrand amounted almost to intimacy, frustrate with imperturbable and somewhat ironical obstinacy the really meritorious efforts which

the minister made to induce him to adopt a wiser and more moderate policy. Talleyrand's advice, which was supported by reason, the force of things, and the opinion of all sensible men, did not modify on a single point the plans of a wild policy; and are we to believe that in an enterprise so dangerous, so opposed to the views of this far-sighted, moderate-minded man, the enemy of extreme parties, it suddenly became the determining cause? Talleyrand was not very accessible to scruples; he was above all things a courtier, and a complaisant. But what has never been contested, is, that he possessed tact and moderation. He had for a long time been frightened by the foolish drift, the gigantic aims of Napoleon's policy; his good common sense was as much revolted as it was alarmed by them. What interest could he have in urging Napoleon, against his convictions, to rush upon such hazardous enterprises? Was it not his interest, on the contrary, to dissuade him from them, if it were only to retain the advantage of his privileged position? He was not, however, a man to compromise himself by an useless disapprobation; and it is very probable that, being informed somewhat late of plans that were already being carried out, and on which he had not been consulted, he consented to approve what he could not hinder. But such an assent is very different from the influence that is attributed to him. As the part that he is supposed to have played was opposed to his interest, his character, and his well-known moderate opinions, it is for those who accuse him to furnish more conclusive proofs than assertions that are devoid of all probability.

Whatever may have been said, after Napoleon himself, in order to render this question of responsibility, so important in history, obscure, the closer we study it, the more we recognise that in the affair of Spain, as in that of the Duc d'Enghien, he only consulted his unbridled passions; the conception is his, the plan is his; even the execution is his, for his agents did nothing without his orders. From the moment that he laid hands upon Etruria, the property of Spain, this fatal idea, which had already for a long time existed in his mind,

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began to develope and gradually to unfold. In order to meet the complaints of the Court of Spain, he offered them the spoils of the house of Braganza, to whom he had sent his ultimatum; and this division of Portugal was itself only a step towards invading and insensibly enchaining Spain. As for his ultimatum, he knew it to be so unacceptable, that he did not even wait for the regent's reply to dispose of Portugal. He did not receive this reply till the 12th of October, and as early as the 25th of September he charged Duroc to come to an understanding with Izquierdo for the division of Portugal. The representatives of this unfortunate country, so shamefully sacrificed for having had confidence in a treaty signed by Napoleon, made all the concessions, in order to satisfy him, that an offended conqueror or a betrayed ally could have exacted. Not only did they consent to join the continental blockade, to confiscate British merchandise, to close their ports to the English, but they engaged to declare war on this nation to whom they were bound by an ancient alliance, convinced that this measure, wrung from them in their distress, would not be imputed to them as a crime. Upon one point alone the regent offered supplicating remonstrances against the conditions dictated by Napoleon. He considered that it was against his honour to confiscate private property belonging to the English, and could not bring himself to ratify this article. This was all that Napoleon wanted. He immediately recalled his ambassador from Lisbon, and commanded Junot to enter Spain, in order to march upon Portugal.[1]

Writing to the King of Spain the same day, October 12, Napoleon said, 'I will meet your Majesty's wishes with regard to Portugal, and in any case the sovereignty will belong to Spain, as your Majesty has appeared to desire.' King Charles IV had by no means desired this inconvenient present; he accepted it reluctantly, as an indemnity for Etruria, but he was still far from suspecting to what good account Napoleon

[1] Napoleon to Champagny. October 12, 1807.; to Clarke, Minister of War, the same day.

was about to turn this benefit. He did not see that in making himself partaker of these iniquities, he was placing himself at the mercy of his powerful accomplice. That the project of seizing the whole or part of the Spanish provinces was thus early formed in Napoleon's mind, it is impossible to doubt. Junot had already entered Spain; and on the 17th of October his master sent him instructions, in which we find these significant words: 'Give me a description of all the provinces through which you pass, of the routes, of the nature of the ground; send me some *sketches*. Charge the engineers with this work, *which it is important to have*. Let me know the distances between the villages, the nature of the country, the resources that it offers.' This was of Spain, let it be remarked, and not of Portugal. It was a singular way of entering a country as a friend! To what did all these recommendations tend? What was the aim of having plans made by engineers, in a country that he was crossing as an ally? All this is curiously strange and equivocal.

But what had Spain to be uneasy about? Napoleon had re-opened his negotiations with Izquierdo, and at this very moment he was drawing up in concert with him the stipulations of that famous treaty of Fontainebleau, which was about to offer Spain the gain that she coveted, and at the same time prepare the way for the carrying out of Napoleon's scheme. He granted to the negotiator the most unlooked-for advantages. He wished every one to be tranquillized and contented. The Prince of Peace, who was exposed to the hatred of the heir presumptive, feared for the future; an independent principality was created for him in the South of Portugal, from which he could afterwards brave his enemies. The Queen of Portugal was despoiled and discontented; another principality, in the North, was given to her and her children, under the title of Northern Lusitania. The King of Spain also desired to have a solace; he was promised half the Portuguese colonies, and he received the pompous title of *Emperor of the two Americas*. In the division of this rich prey, Napoleon forgot only himself. It sufficed him to have created the happiness

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of his allies; and if he kept in deposit the provinces of Beira, Tras-os-Montes, Estremadura, the centre and the heart of Portugal, it was only '*to dispose of them at the general peace*;'[1] and in this case their possessor, whoever he might be, was to recognise the sovereignty of the King of Spain. Nevertheless, among these tranquillizing clauses, there were a few words carelessly added at the bottom of a schedule, which a more penetrating observer than Izquierdo would have seen augured nothing good for the Spanish monarchy. It was the article which stipulated 'that a fresh corps of forty thousand French troops should be assembled at Bayonne, to be ready to enter Spain, and march into Portugal in case the English sent reinforcements and threatened an attack.'[2] This was in reality providing against a very distant misfortune. Junot had entered with twenty-five thousand men; Spain had sent as many. How was it possible to suppose that these fifty thousand men, to whom Spain could so easily send reinforcements, would be placed in danger by a very improbable landing of the English, and would be insufficient to drive them back?

However, the hypothesis was not after all inadmissible, although forty thousand men was an enormous number. It made the reinforcements larger than the expeditionary corps. The Spanish negotiator had moreover taken the precaution of adding to the article 'that the new corps should not enter Spain without the consent of the two contracting parties.' It did not occur to him that when once this corps d'armée was on an unprotected frontier, they might cross it without asking permission. Napoleon was incapable of such a breach of promise; his respect for frontiers was well known! If the negligent minister of the King of Spain could have read certain passages in the fresh instructions which Napoleon sent to Junot on the 31st of October, three days after the signature of the treaty of Fontainebleau, he would have felt less sure of his good intentions, and would even have begun to have had some suspicion. In this letter he recommends his lieutenant to present

[1] Treaty of Fontainebleau, Articles III. and VIII.

[2] Schedule annexed to Article VI.

himself as a friend: 'to enter the territory of Portugal *as Spanish territory*,' a comparison that was not very tranquillizing for Spain, since he adds, a little further on: 'I have already informed you that when I authorized you to enter this country *as an ally*, it was that you might make yourself master of the fleet, but that I had already determined to seize Portugal.' To seize it for Spain, it will doubtless be said. Not at all, for he concludes by telling him: 'As soon as you have the different strong places in your hands, you will put French commandants in them, and you will make sure of these positions. I need not tell you *that you must not put a single strong place in the power of the Spanish*, especially in that part of the country which is to remain in my hands.' (According to the terms of the treaty.)

These explicit instructions, sent to Junot immediately after the conclusion of the treaty, taken together with the orders to have plans made of Spanish localities by engineers, and the concentration of a corps of forty thousand men upon the frontier of Spain,—these three facts, we say, are sufficient evidence that the treaty of Fontainebleau, so far from having been for a single moment regarded as serious by its author, as some pretend, was never anything more for him than a means of more easily deceiving Spain, a pretext for introducing himself into her territory, and an opening for still vaster projects. Another proof not less significant of Napoleon's plans was the absolute secresy which he imposed on King Charles towards all those who would have been able to enlighten him. The treaty of Fontainebleau remained a mystery for all the Ministers.[1] Between this weak-minded man and the Emperor there was no longer any intermediate person. A treaty to interpret, spoils to divide, a military occupation to maintain together—how many dissensions, how many conflicts, how many unforeseen difficulties would not arise out of these, especially in a country weakened and torn by factions, and

[1] This fact, asserted first by M. de Cevallos, in his celebrated *Exposé* (1808), and afterwards denied by Escoiquiz, has been confirmed in a most incontestable manner by the *Mémoires* of Azanza, and of O'Farrill, both, like Cevallos, former ministers of King Charles.

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for a man so skilful in creating them and turning them to account! This was all he needed for the present; the elements of an immense conflagration were collected together, the spark only was wanting; he had only to wait, his craft and his fortune would do the rest!

CHAPTER V.

INSTITUTION OF TITLES OF NOBILITY AND SUPPRESSION OF THE TRIBUNATE (*August—October* 1807).

WHILE Napoleon was doing everything to rekindle war, France, believing his promises, was celebrating the blessings of peace. The war is ended; he has said it; we know it; he is at last going to allow the exhausted country some repose, and turn his attention to her internal prosperity. He will be his own prime minister, and perform wonders in economics as great as those which have gained him his military glory. He has done enough as a general; he will now devote his genius to the development of the riches of France. He will multiply her industrial and commercial resources a hundredfold. England is not yet conquered, it is true, but what matters that, since the whole of the continent is subdued? To reduce her, nothing more is requisite than to leave her to decline in isolation. Such were the dreams that Napoleon encouraged by declarations that were greedily welcomed.

He had been received on his return to Paris with adulation so servile that it exceeded anything that had hitherto been heard, and will be quoted by the remotest posterity whenever it is wished to show to what a depth men can sink whose minds are corrupted by servitude. 'Sire,' said Lacépède, the president of the Senate, after having exhausted the vocabulary of hyperbole, in recalling the exploits of the last campaign, 'such are the prodigies which, it might be said,

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required centuries to achieve, and which your Majesty has performed in a few months. . . . We cannot worthily praise your Majesty. Your glory is too great. Only posterity will discover its immense height!' And Séguier, in the name of the Court of Appeal, said: 'Napoleon is beyond the compass of history. He is above admiration. *It is only love that can rise to him!*' The archbishop of Paris tried unsuccessfully to compete with Séguier. He declared 'that the annals of the world offered no example so marvellous and so memorable,' which appeared tame and suspiciously cold. But Frochot, prefect of the Seine, deserved the palm, for the ingenious manner in which he humbled his rivals while he exalted his master. '*All these things*,' he exclaimed, engulfed in ecstasy, '*are truly beyond our capacity*. The silence of astonishment, which admiration enjoins, seems to be the only means of expressing them.'[1]

The session of the Legislative Body was opened on the 16th of August, by a speech in which Napoleon himself recounted the events which had just changed the face of Europe. In all that he had done, he said, he had only had in view *the prosperity of his people*, more dear in his eyes than his own glory. He then addressed the nation, and expressed his satisfaction with them: 'Frenchmen,' he said; 'your conduct in these last times, when your Emperor was more than five hundred leagues away, *has heightened my esteem and the opinion which I had formed of your character*. I have felt proud of being the first among you; you are a great and a good people!'

That he believed them at any rate to be a good people, is clearly proved by his announcement, as a proof of his gratitude to them, '*that in order to prevent the revival of any feudal titles incompatible with the constitution of the empire*,' he had just created several imperial titles, to give new lustre to the principal of his subjects. Create new titles of nobility, in order to prevent the revival of the feudal system! He did indeed reckon on the goodness of the French people, when he offered to

[1] *Moniteur* of July 29, 1807.

confer such a benefit on them, in these plain terms! It was by a trick similar to this ingenious phraseology that in the decree which re-established state prisons, Napoleon introduced an argument founded on the necessity 'of guaranteeing liberty and equality.' This precious gift was accompanied by a promise, that was not so easy to perform. 'I intend,' said Napoleon, 'that in all parts of my empire, *even in the smallest hamlet,* the prosperity of the citizens and *the value of land* shall be augmented by the effect of a general system of improvements, which I have conceived.' The Emperor concluded by announcing to his faithful subjects 'that he contemplated various changes for *simplifying* and *perfecting* their institutions.' The perfecting was the creation of titles of nobility; the simplification was the suppression of the Tribunate.

The creation of the large estates, and of some of the rich endowments that were added to them, dates from the year 1806. Napoleon wished to extend and make it general by a complete system, and although the statute relative to the imperial nobility was not promulgated till the 11th of March, 1808, I speak of it here because the greater part of the preparatory measures of this statute were passed several months before its promulgation. The re-establishment of the titles of nobility is one of Napoleon's acts which he was most willing to condemn at St. Helena. He had discovered, it is true, a number of advantages in this institution of which he had never dreamed at the time, among others, that of *reconciling France with Europe*,[1] an object which did not appear to occupy him much during his reign. But he admitted that in reality it had offended the taste of the nation for equality, and that it had rather injured than benefitted himself. Considered with regard to its success, the measure was never popular, not even with those whose dearest wishes it was supposed to gratify. It ran counter to the ideas, the interests, and the manners and customs of the period. The privileged class previous to the Revolution regretted their ancient titles, none of them thought of claiming new ones. We see by

[1] *Mémorial* of Las Cases.

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Napoleon's correspondence that he was compelled, for instance, to order Bernadotte to assume his title of Prince of Ponte-Corvo. The Legion of Honour, which is now represented as the institution from which the new titles of nobility sprung, after having been established to prevent the revival of these vain distinctions, had acquired a great popularity, though it had at first been disclaimed by all enlightened men; but the imperial nobility, without having deserved either hatred or love in the course of its ephemeral existence, was always ridiculed by the lower classes. Why? They would probably have been puzzled to give the reason; in this, however, their instinct was surer than the so-called profound calculations of the creator of that artificial work.

What the people confusedly felt was that this aristocracy, created in a few hours by the capricious will of a man who thought he was supplying the work of centuries, and opened as a refuge to worn-out functionaries, was anything in the world but an aristocracy. It was free, it is true, from the greater part of the evils which belong to oligarchies, but, on the other hand, it had none of the advantages of an old nobility, and was consequently only a burdensome and superfluous body. Aristocratical institutions have had their *raison d'être* in history; they have often held a glorious place; they have, in spite of their vices, developed great characters, manly virtues, and formed rare examples for humanity; but what at all times and in all countries has constituted the essence of an aristocracy is power, because there can be no aristocracy without independence. In monarchical countries especially there can be no other reason for the existence of an aristocracy than because, by its very privileges, it opposes a useful barrier to the encroachments of the power of the crown. Deprive it of this office, its utility disappears, and it is nothing more than an abuse.

In countries, too, where the aristocracy have fulfilled this important mission, they have remained dear to the nation, in spite of the evils that are inseparable from the institution, and in spite of the constant progress of civilized nations

towards social equality. Wherever they have preserved a people from an absolute government, they may be said to have justified their existence, and it is easy to acquit them. In France, on the contrary, where the aristocracy never redeemed their privileges by their services; where, with all their brilliant and generous qualities, they never showed any aptitude for politics; where, since Louis XIV especially, they had been nothing more than a sort of complement to state pomps, and the personification of courtiership, the recollection of this institution was hateful, and it is perhaps not too much to say that it greatly contributed to pervert and lead astray the passion for equality, so often turned aside from its true end. It certainly was not as a barrier to absolute power that Napoleon revived the nobility, for he did not give them an atom of political influence. Like Louis XIV, he only regarded them as a kind of royal retinue, to increase the splendour of the throne. But the difference between the intention and the effect produced was so great, that it accounts for the ironical smile with which the new nobles were everywhere greeted. The nobility of Louis XIV had very little real power, although they still retained a great many privileges, but they possessed at any rate old traditions, distinguished manners, an incomparable elegance, and the prestige of antiquity which commands respect, things in which Napoleon's nobility were absolutely wanting. Any aristocracy that would last must admit into their circle new men who gradually become penetrated with their spirit, and who in the metamorphose do not always escape ridicule; but what had never been seen before, was an aristocracy composed entirely of *parvenus*, a nobility of which all the members were so many *Bourgeois-gentilshommes*. These newly-created nobles were all the more awkward in their fresh position, from their having no other guide than their own pretensions, and were the less capable of adding any lustre to the throne, because they derived everything from it, and were held in the strictest and most humble dependence by the Emperor.

They were absolutely devoid of political influence, and they

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had none of the influence of prestige, nor did they answer any of the ends for which their pompous creator had made them. With regard to the motives which were officially alleged by Cambacérès and Lacépède, the forced supporters of this measure, the public obstinately refused to believe them. It was, they said, a nobility founded upon merit and not upon privilege, a homage rendered to the worth of their ancestors, a last blow dealt to the feudal system, a new prize added to public rewards. But every one knew, since the philosophers of the eighteenth century, that merit is personal, that it is disowning it rather than encouraging it, to make its recompense hereditary. Again, the principle of this aristocratical transmission, sanctioned for the benefit of the rich, was violated to the detriment of the poor, for the statute stipulated that in order to transmit the title of *prince* it was requisite to give proof of a revenue of two hundred thousand francs; in order to transmit the title of *count*, it was requisite to give proof of a revenue of thirty thousand francs; and of fifteen thousand, and of three thousand, for the titles of *baron* and *chevalier*. The title was worth nothing without money. Deprived of this power, it dropped with the holder.

It is not less derisory to pretend that the institution was a check to privilege, and did not violate the principle of equality. Every one knew that the statute re-established entailed estates for the benefit of the ennobled families, that it authorized them to institute inalienable majorats, transmissible from male to male, by order of primogeniture, which was a derogation of the principles of the Civil Code. And, finally, it was a strange illusion to imagine that they were about to deal a decisive blow to the ancient nobility, by reviving all the privileges that had given them their strength. With regard to titles, antiquity has always taken the precedence of actual importance, and if anything could restore to those of the ancient régime the value that they had lost, it was assuredly this pretended regeneration of a superannuated institution. Independently of this diminution of their value arising from an inevitable comparison, these favours were rendered still more worthless in consequence of the pro-

fusion with which they were bestowed, and the way in which they were distributed. They were not awarded to certain persons by virtue of a special choice of the sovereign, and in consideration of individual merit; they belonged by right to a certain class of functionaries, as a kind of supplementary gratuity, appertaining to their post. A man entered a government office as a simple clerk, he came out of it a count or a baron. It was a true spontaneous generation, which immediately increased the value of all the old titles. The new nobility caused the old nobility to be valued and regretted. The great dignitaries were princes; the ministers, senators, archbishops, and councillors of State were counts; the presidents of electoral colleges, the presidents of the courts of law, and the mayors of large towns were barons; the members of the Legion of Honour were chevaliers. With regard to the prefects, generals, civil and military officers, the Emperor reserved to himself the right of choosing their titles.

The imperial nobility, that singular disinterment of the customs and ideas of the ancient régime perverted from their true signification, was regarded by Napoleon as a purely administrative organization. It had another merit in his eyes, that of turning to his own account all illustrious men, both young and old, of stamping them with his effigy as the smaller coin of his own glory. He wished that in new France everything should date from him, and was delighted to bury the famous names of the Republic under titles that only recalled the empire, and which suggested no other thought than that the men were his creatures. When Masséna was spoken of, people thought of the victory of Zurich; but when he was called the Duc de Rivoli, they thought of the man who had created him duke. He also hoped gradually to get rid of the old aristocracy, by inducing them to clothe themselves in his livery; and he did in fact obtain a certain number of interested adherents. He took a pleasure in making a duke of the old régime a count of the new, to prove the superiority of his titles.

In order to ensure a preponderance of the military element

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in this new nobility, which he rightly considered as the main-spring of his system, he made a fresh distribution to his companions in arms, of what he termed the *produce* of the war. He had always regarded this as the only certain means of gaining their attachment and of securing their co-operation in his work. As early as the first campaign in Italy, he had begun to put into practice this theory, which was openly avowed in all his proclamations; but as he had at that time only very limited means at his disposal, and was compelled to have some regard for public opinion, he could not fully carry out his ideas. Now that he had all Europe to work upon, and that no power could any longer thwart his will, he showed the full extent of views which he had hitherto only partially advanced. This system was in reality no other than that of a barbarous conqueror, distributing to his companions the lands and riches of the vanquished. In Italy, in Poland, in Hanover, and in Westphalia, Napoleon had seized domains to the amount of two hundred and fifty millions of francs. He was, it is said, the rightful possessor since the lands had belonged to the ancient sovereigns of the country, either ecclesiastical or secular, and were not the spoils of the people: a sophism convenient for the spoilers, for if victory gives the conqueror a right to the property of the conquered, Napoleon was as much entitled to the lands of the people as to those of the sovereign. How can it be maintained, however, that the nation had no right to domains which were national property, and that they could see them pass into the hands of a stranger or an enemy with indifference?

Napoleon left a part of these domains to the crowned servants, whom he had appointed to reign over these different countries with an external show of royalty. The remainder, amounting to a sum of about a hundred and fifty millions of francs, he distributed to his principal generals, under the form of majorats. With these gifts, which were afterwards increased, several of them had as much as a million of francs a year. At the same time, being anxious to satisfy by a readier means that need of enjoyment which had been developed to

such a fearful degree among soldiers who had lost all their ancient patriotic ambition, and who felt that the future was very uncertain under so exacting a master, he deducted a sum of eleven million francs from the foreign contributions, and gave it to them, half in ready money, and half in government annuities. Berthier had a million, Ney, Davoust, Soult, and Bessières each had six hundred thousand francs, Masséna, Augereau, Bernadotte, Mortier, and Victor each four hundred thousand, and the others in proportion. A sum of eighteen millions was divided between the officers and soldiers according to their services and wounds.

The pensions which Napoleon bestowed upon his principal civilians were so small compared with those of the army, that it was impossible to misunderstand his intention of marking in an unmistakable manner the superiority of the military over the civil service. In this he was consistent with his political system; he acted as the dictator and tribune of that military democracy which had elected him for their chief. Being no longer able to give them at home the spoils of the ancient privileged classes, he applied a sort of agrarian law to foreign nations by means of conquest. Even when he created a new nobility, these dupes of fanaticism continued to look upon him as their Gracchus as well as their Cæsar. They forgave him for having made dukes, because he had made one out of the son of a peasant, and they believed that their own fortune would increase indefinitely like his own, thanks to that inexhaustible *ager publicus* which was Europe.

The definite suppression of the Tribunate, which had been announced in ambiguous terms in the imperial opening speech, was adjourned to the end of the Legislative Session. Before informing the Assembly of this final change, it was thought well to let them once more go through that increasingly useless and short ceremony which was called a session. The session of 1807 was inaugurated by one of those brilliant *exposés de situation*, in which deification took the place of defence, and which seemed to be given for no other reason than to intimate to the members what was to be the tone of their speeches.

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This intimation was carefully observed. The legislative work was henceforth reduced to voting. There were no more difficulties raised, no more unforeseen incidents, no more contradiction; even discussion ceased. The legislative debates of the year 1807, although they were on a great variety of very important bills—among others, one relative to the Code of Commerce—do not amount to the twentieth part of those of a session of the Consulate; and not to a hundredth part, if we omit the speeches that were simply laudatory. All the real work was done by the Council of State, the Tribunate approved, the Legislative Body ratified. It was an uninterrupted stream of admiration, in which enthusiasm, love and gratitude towards the sovereign overflowed at every instant and on every occasion. Open this immense collection at random, read a speech, the first that comes to hand: 'Gentlemen, the genius that governs us sees everything, and neglects nothing.' . . . . To what exploit, to what fresh benefit was the speaker alluding? To a bill relative to the *registry of mortgages*.[1]

How much sincerity could there be, after all, in praise in which there was neither moderation nor dignity? There was the dazzled admiration of success. This feeling was sincere, for there was ground for it, and even now, after all the events which have shown us how ephemeral the splendour was, it is difficult not to be dazzled by it. Still, notwithstanding the fantastic picture which Cretet, minister of the interior, drew of our state of prosperity; notwithstanding these triumphs, more brilliant than lasting, those great works announced with so much noise, but for the most part only carried out on paper; notwithstanding the 13,400 leagues of roads, the eighteen rivers rendered navigable, the ten canals finished or begun; notwithstanding the improvement in wool, and the 'seven national sheepfolds,' the loans to manufacturers, and those decennial prizes that were never distributed; notwithstanding useful build-

[1] Sitting of September 3, 1807. Discours de Mouricault (*Archives Parlementaires*).

ings, like the public granaries, and ostentatious monuments, like the Vendôme Column; notwithstanding, in short, that delusive peace, of which Cretet said 'that the conqueror had signed it *without stipulating any advantage for himself*'—that peace which no longer existed, even then, when it was exalted in these lying terms; notwithstanding so many brilliant and specious appearances, France did not possess either true prosperity or true greatness.

She was not really prosperous; for not only was there no feeling of security, a necessary condition for the welfare of nations, but all the evils produced by so many years of war still weighed heavily on her; and it was an insult to public good sense to try to induce a belief by means of such gross lies that they had suddenly disappeared, as if they had been made to vanish by magic. She was not really great, for all her great men had either been banished or put to silence. She could still point with pride to her generals and soldiers, although the army, which, if brave as ever, had gradually sunk from the worship of the country and liberty to that of glory, and from the worship of glory to that of riches, was corrupt and degenerate; but where were her great citizens? Where were her great orators, her great politicians, her great philosophers, her great writers of every kind? Where, at least, were their descendants?

All who had shown a spark of genius or pride had been sacrificed for the benefit of a single man. They had disappeared; some crushed under the wheels of his chariot, others forced to live obscurely in some unknown retreat, and, what was graver still, their race seemed extinct. The evil was not the effect of a momentary crisis, it affected the future, and seemed as if it would last for ever. France was imprisoned, as it were, in an iron net, and the issues were closed to all the generous and ardent youth that had either intellectual or moral activity. Yes, whatever may have been said, France suffered during these stifling years in which all that was most noble and most elevated in her genius was condemned to a dull and silent sterility. It was not with indifference that a nation who had occupied so high

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a rank in the civilized world, recognised that they had no longer either eloquence or poetry or any intellectual life. They were sick at heart, and, to use an expression of Lafayette's, 'they must have been heroes not to have given way in despair at the prætorian victories.' Who can say how many generous lives were at that time consumed in obscure anxiety? History will probably never lift up more than a corner of the veil. It is certain that the greater part of the eminent men whose youth passed away in this unfortunate time, in which hope itself seemed to have forsaken them, always spoke of it later with a kind of horror. Their noble sufferings have left but few traces, and even their memory has perished. They are only revealed to the historian by the depth of the silence; but there remains one immortal testimony in a page written in words that burn, and which will live as long as our language is spoken among men. At the very moment that Napoleon made his triumphal entry in the midst of a prostrate people, and when the air was resounding with the noise of official cheers, a number of manuscript copies of this avenging page, which was first printed in the *Mercure*, were circulated from hand to hand, distributed by invisible enemies, and read with insatiable eagerness. This is what it contained:—

'When, in the silence of abjection, nothing is heard but the chains of the slave and the voice of the informer; when all tremble before the tyrant, when it is as dangerous to receive his favours as to incur his displeasure, the historian appears charged with the vengeance of peoples. It is in vain that Nero prospers; Tacitus is born in the empire, he grows up unknown beside the ashes of Germanicus, and Providence has already given over the glory of the master of the world to an obscure child. If the work of the historian is noble, it is often dangerous; but there are altars, like that of honour, which, though abandoned, still demand sacrifices. God is not annihilated because his temple is deserted. Wherever the least chance of Fortune remains, there is no heroism in tempting her. Magnanimous actions are those of which the certain result is misfortune or death. After all, what does it matter that we have reverses, if

our name, when pronounced by posterity, will cause a generous heart to beat two thousand years after our death.'[1]

The day that Chateaubriand wrote these immortal lines, on seeing the triumph of force and the discouragement, the distress, and the terror of all who still retained a love of liberty, he personified the very soul of France. He held language that was worthy of her, and took his rank among those great writers whose voice resounds through centuries. His most famous books may be forgotten, but this page will remain connected with the recollection of the empire, as an indelible stigma, and is the protest of that minority that was sacrificed, whose murmurs could no longer even find an echo. The visionary that day did the deed of a man. He has been accused of having shown a great deal of inconsistency, of littleness, and petty vanity in his life; even his literary glory has been attacked by those who flattered him the most. Chateaubriand had almost all the failings of a man whose character is governed by his imagination; but this burst of a generous mind cancels everything, and for one short moment the poet was truly great. He rose by a sudden flight to those sublime regions in which genius is confounded with heroism.

Chateaubriand escaped punishment, thanks to the intervention of his friend Fontanes, and to events abroad which diverted Napoleon's attention. The writer came off with the confiscation of his share in the *Mercure*, which was in reality the whole of his fortune. It is to anxieties of the same kind that we may attribute the fact that Napoleon allowed General Malet to go comparatively unpunished, after the discovery of an attempt

[1] This page is the beginning of an article by Chateaubriand on the *Voyage Pittoresque et Historique en Espagne*, by De Laborde (*Mercure de France* of July 4, 1807). In the printed article several passages are found inserted between the beginning and the end of the page, among others this: 'Very soon the author of the *Annales* will only look upon the deified tyrant as a *stage-player, an incendiary, and a parricide.* Like those first Christians of Egypt, who, at the risk of their lives, penetrated the temples of idolatry, seized in the depths of the gloomy sanctuary the divinity to which crime offered the incense of fear, *and dragged to the light of day, instead of a god, some horrible monster.*'

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at a conspiracy, similar to that which had almost succeeded in 1812. This plot, which was laid during the long uncertainty of the campaign of Poland, was detected by the police before it was carried into execution. But its originator was skilful enough to conceal its real character from the once searching eye of the Emperor, who confined himself to detaining Malet in one of the prisons of state without bringing him to trial. Napoleon's mind was more and more absorbed by the great difficulties of his foreign policy, and notwithstanding his astonishing activity, he was overwhelmed by the immense amount of business, and was obliged to discharge a great deal of it in a careless and negligent manner. Ever since he had had the management of the affairs of nearly the whole of Europe, he could no longer give more than a cursory glance to those of France; he merely examined them superficially, only paying attention to details by fits and starts, and aimed at nothing more than producing a general effect. And, as instead of giving more liberty of action to his fellow-workers, he made them more dependent on him, it followed that the greater part of the acts of his home policy were either reckless and shallow, or were mere plans, like those monuments announced with so much ostentation, which he left to future governments to complete. But if several of these schemes were only intended for effect, and rather resembled the decorations of a theatre than substantial edifices, some few among them were suggested by a correct knowledge of the needs of the country.

We can, for instance, speak with unreserved praise of the law which established in several departments houses where mendicants were furnished with food and work, preparatory to the suppression of mendicity; of the adoption of the Code of Commerce; the impulsion given to the work of constructing canals; the institution of the Caisse de Service, founded by Mollien to substitute the Treasury itself for the bankers, who took such a heavy discount on the bills of the receivers-general. This last measure was excellent, for it did away with a stock-jobbing that was ruinous to the State. It was the work of this minister alone, as well as another improvement

that was not less successful; I mean the introduction of the system of accounts by double entry into our finances. The reduction of the interest at the Bank to four per cent. facilitated commercial and industrial transactions, and by turning the Commission of Accounts, which had long been recognised as insufficient, into a Court of Accounts, which from its rank and number was much better able to do the work, the affairs of the State were liquidated with more order, intelligence, and expedition. Every one of these measures was excellent from almost all points.

The organization of the Court of Accounts was however open to some criticisms. If it did, as experience proved, ensure accuracy and expedition in financial affairs, it was still in many respects very inferior to the institution which supplied its place under the ancient régime, and still more so to the one which had been created by the Revolution. The old Chambers of Accounts were sovereign courts. They passed judgments, while the new court was placed in strict dependence on the executive power. Ever since the Constituent, the staff of accountants had been composed of commissioners named by the Legislative Body, and were subject to their control. The principle may have been badly applied; the accountants were not so good as could have been desired, nor was their number sufficient. The five commissioners, who were increased to seven by the Constitution of the Year VIII, were overwhelmed by the mass of accounts in arrear; but in this, as in almost everything else, the legislators of 1789 had displayed both judgment and sagacity. It is in fact to those who vote the taxes that belongs the right of controlling the employment of the public funds. In default of this natural and advantageous subordination of the Court of Accounts to the Legislative Body, there was only one way of organizing it which would guarantee its integrity, and that was to give to it the complete independence of a judiciary body. But such an institution would have been a perfect anomaly in the imperial administration. Napoleon therefore constituted the Court of Accounts as he had constituted everything; he made it an instrument of power. He divided it into three chambers, which answered to

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a similar division of the work with which the court was charged He gave the men large salaries, he made them irremovable but he restricted their power, and reduced them to a body o functionaries. Under the ancient régime they had been magistrates. He gave them the right of controlling the agents of the Government, but for the benefit of the Government itself, and not for the benefit of the State The distinction is easy to understand. Every Government has an interest in being served by honest accountants, who will verify the receipts as well as the expenditure of the funds that are confided to them; and the Court of Accounts did this remarkably well. But honesty is still more necessary in the minister who orders the expenditure, than in the agent who carries out his orders; for how often has it not been seen that power has become a source of profit, and has been sought by a disgraceful speculation in public money? In this the Court of Accounts was absolutely powerless; it was nothing but an administrative machinery, placed in the hands of the very minister who ought to have controlled it. 'The court,' said the eighteenth article of the law, 'can in no case claim any jurisdiction over the ministers' (*ordonnateurs*). And Defermon added, by way of explanation: 'The court is to examine strictly the work of the accountable agents, and not that of the *ordonnateurs*. . . . It would be impossible for them to apprehend the motives which have given rise to certain commands. They are not called upon to pass judgment on the Government.'[1] Without passing judgment, they might have summoned the Ministry before the Legislative Body, who were their natural judges. Even in affairs that came under the jurisdiction of the court, its decisions were not without appeal, for the agent condemned had always three months to refer it to the Council of State. The Government was therefore in reality its own judge; and neither in financial affairs, any more than in others, had the nation either control or redress.

This radical vice of all the new institutions appeared in a much more menacing form in a Senatus Consultum, dated

[1] *Archives Parlementaires.* Sitting of September 5, 1807.

October 12th. This law, to use an expression of Treilhard, was a *purging measure*, which would rid the magistracy of the corrupt element that had crept into it, and separate the pure gold from the dross that disgraced it. This purging was a fresh blow dealt to the judiciary power, already so weak and so dependent. The Constitution of the Year VIII had established the irremovability of the judges. This guarantee, which was a very insufficient barrier against the temptations of promotion, and dread of the severity of the Ministers, had been weakened till it was nothing more than a shadow. The right of supervision and of admonition given to the grand judge, and the disciplinary and suspensory jurisdiction attributed to the Court of Cassation, had placed the magistrates at the mercy of the Government. These means of restraint, combined with those of ordinary justice, were more than sufficient, for there was no need of so many different arms to reach prevaricating magistrates, and it was still more important to secure the independence of upright judges. There existed another repressive law, which under the consular régime declared that every judge forfeited his office whose name was not kept on the list of eligible persons, a superfluous penalty that had become inapplicable with the system of electoral colleges. The repeal of this law served as a pretext for overthrowing the weak barrier which still protected the magistrates against ministerial power. The Senatus Consultum decreed that there should be a general examination of the magistracy.

This examination was entrusted to a commission of ten senators, named by his Imperial Majesty, who were to give a final decision with regard to the maintenance or dismissal of the judges pointed out in the report of the commissioners. This measure was the complete destruction of the principle of irremovability, for if the Emperor had the right to decree it one day, who could guarantee the judges against his will the next? The engagements which Treilhard made for the future were therefore simply illusory. And as if they did not feel sufficiently tranquillized by this great purging, it was decreed by another article of the Senatus Consultum that henceforth the judges would not be appointed for life, unless

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after five years' exercise of their functions they were deemed worthy by the Emperor.

In reality, this outrage on the honour of the magistracy and on the independence of the judges was nothing more than a miserable political expedient. At the time of the organization of the judicial body, a great number of disheartened republicans had sought refuge in an honourable office, in which they were aloof from politics. Since then, immense changes had taken place; and the need was felt of having judges more in harmony with the new ideas and customs. But as there was nothing in the conduct of almost any of these men on which the Government could lay hold, they had recourse to this indirect and underhand means of dismissing them[1]. No one is safe under despotic Governments, not even those whose positions they have created. And they are always the first to attack the laws that they have made, for it is their essential characteristic to have no other guide than their own humour.

The Legislative Body concluded their short session by voting, without examination and without discussion, the budget, which was only presented to them as a form. The estimates were only roughly made. Not only was the expenditure of the current year, fixed at seven hundred and twenty millions, estimated much below its actual amount, which was in reality seven hundred and eighty millions, but none of the budgets of the five previous years had been entirely liquidated, and the Government was still gathering taxes that were in arrear since the year 1802. All the accounts presented by the Government were based upon hypothetical estimates. Seven hundred millions were supposed to have sufficed for the year 1806; the expenditure was even roughly calculated at six hundred and eighty-nine millions; it had amounted to seven hundred and seventy millions, and no one was then aware of it. The receipts had fortunately risen far higher than had been expected, owing to the war centimes, and the establishment of the *droits réunis*, but the Legislative Body knew no

[1] Thibaudeau.

more about this amount than about that of the expenditure. It was roughly estimated at somewhere about seven hundred and twenty millions. Everything was left in an unsettled state, so that it might all be adjusted according to the Emperor's good pleasure. The evident insufficiency of the receipts to meet these different deficits did not hinder Napoleon from taking off the ten-centime war tax, which he had put on at the time of the rupture with England. He only asked for six hundred millions for the expenditure of the year 1808. He had in fact an easy way of clearing up all these arrears, thanks to the sixty millions levied upon Austria in 1806, and the six hundred millions levied upon Prussia in 1807, and he made free use of it. After deducting what was required to meet the increase in the expenditure, for the payments and rewards of the army, for the sums that had to be advanced to the Treasury and to the Caisse de Service, there must have remained about three hundred millions, a formidable lever in his active hands, and which, under the name of Treasury of the Army, was at once a reserve fund in case of need and a guarantee against unforeseen contingencies. These three hundred millions, which he kept with jealous care, and on which he feasted his covetous eyes, were his supreme resource for bad days; it was his safeguard against a possible change of fortune; it was money with which he could play his last game with Europe.

When the Legislative Body had tractably passed all the bills that had been submitted to their approval, they were informed on the day of the close of the session of the Senatus Consultum which suppressed the Tribunate. It is true that the abolition of the Tribunate was but the suppression of a word. Repeated purgings and improvements had long since reduced this body to a mere shadow of a deliberative assembly, or, as Boulay de la Meurthe said in his report, 'a vice which implied a contradiction.'[1]

We may add that the Legislative Body itself might have been suppressed without the slightest inconvenience, so little

[1] Sitting of September 18, 1807.

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influence did it exercise over the Government and the course of things. Either by his decrees, his Senatus Consulta, or simply by a decision of the Council of State, Napoleon settled the greater part of the questions which have at all times been the province of the legislative power. He had, for instance, just decreed by a simple opinion of the section of legislation in the Council of State, that the right of deciding questions of dispossession for public purposes belonged to the Government and not to the Legislative Body, who had hitherto possessed this prerogative. But the Legislative Body was an assembly which he still felt he had need of; its name reminded him, moreover, of seven years of silence and servility, while that of the Tribunate only awoke the odious recollection of legal resistance and firm and moderate patriotism. After having driven out of this assembly the courageous minority that had dared to brave his tyranny, he had gradually reduced it to fifty members, filled it with his creatures, and divided it into sections who only debated in secret committee. Finally, he had withdrawn from the tribunes their most important privileges, and had transferred them to the Senate. But in spite of his efforts to disparage them, the name of the Tribunate had retained a certain popular prestige. The eloquence of its orators had been the last gasp of expiring liberty, the last echo of the generous accents of the French Revolution. These shattered ruins recalled the edifice, they reminded the nation that they had known brighter days, higher ambitions; they represented, in a word, traditions vanquished to-day, but which might triumph to-morrow, for nothing that honours, raises, and ennobles human nature, is ever definitely vanquished. For all these reasons the very name of the Tribunate was obnoxious and must be got rid of.

Boulay de la Meurthe was accordingly sent to inform the Tribunate, in Napoleon's name, that they had ceased to exist. He did ample justice to the virtues of the members of this assembly. They had, he said, *constantly shown themselves wiser than the institution itself*, but since the establishment of the empire, the Tribunate had become a *useless body that was out*

of place and out of harmony with the epoch, and its abolition 'was not so much a change, as an improvement, in our institutions.' The three sections were transferred to the Legislative Body, who were to debate with closed doors, and give their opinion in conjunction with the orators of the Council of State. The actual members of the Tribunate were offered an asylum in the bosom of the Legislative Body. Those whose time had expired were placed, some in the new Court of Accounts, and the rest in differerent Government offices. But lest the Legislative Body, so long mute, should be intoxicated by the inestimable privilege that was accorded them of debating in secret committee, and of expressing their opinion in public by the mouth of a commission, the Senatus Consultum decided 'that in future no one could be a member of the Legislative Body *who was under forty years of age*' (Article 10). This man, who had been a general in the Italian army at twenty-six, First Consul at thirty, and who even then, at thirty-eight, was Emperor and ruler of so many kingdoms, would not allow others to take part in public affairs before they had reached an age which he himself had not yet attained,—an insolent regulation which showed how much he regarded himself as a being far superior to other men, and especially how much he felt it his duty to distrust youth and its noble passions. With such precautions there was little fear that the Legislative Body would abuse the liberty that was restored to it. It was with a well-grounded confidence that the poet Fontanes, who celebrated with invariable enthusiasm all the acts both good and bad of Napoleon's policy, exclaimed 'that these walls, which were astonished at their silence,—a silence that was about to cease—*would not hear the roar of popular tempests*.' They were in fact well protected from anything of the kind. 'Let us show ourselves worthy of such a benefit,' he continued; 'let there be no storms in the Tribune, let the modest triumph of reason alone be applauded. Let truth especially be spoken with courage, but also with wisdom, and let it shine with all its light. A great prince cannot but love its splendour. It alone is worthy of him; why should he fear it? The more we look

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at him, and the higher he rises, the more we esteem and admire him.' The orator displayed as much care in embellishing his adulation, as a jeweller would take in setting his diamonds. He forgot that nothing makes base sentiments more conspicuous than clothing them in fine language.

It was not enough to abolish the Tribunate; they were expected to show joy and gratitude for the blow that had put an end to their political existence. 'I propose,' said Carion Nisas, 'that we present an address to the throne which will convince the world that we have received the act of the Senate without any regret for our office, any uneasiness for the country; but with feelings of love and devotion to the monarch, which will live eternally in our hearts!' The proposition was unanimously adopted, and the Tribunate raised their voices for the last time before they sank into oblivion. The tribunes asserted that in the act which put an end to their functions, 'they had only found fresh reasons for expressing *their homage, their admiration, and their gratitude to the Emperor*. . . . they did not feel so much that their career was over, as that they had attained the end of their efforts and the reward of their devotions.'[1] This despicable language proves better than any reflections, what a series of changes the Tribunate had passed through before the fatal blow was dealt. Thus perished, in the disrepute into which its own creator had brought it, an assembly whose works had honoured the cause of French liberty. It had in reality ceased to exist long before its final dissolution, but its disappearance was nevertheless a significant fact for any one who reflects. What, after all, was this *constitution of the empire* of which the name so often recurred in official manifestoes, if a stroke of the pen sufficed to abolish any one of the great bodies of the State? Was not the whole of the constitution in the hand that held the pen?

It is now time to return to the situation of Spain, and to relate the events which had forestalled Napoleon's expectations there.

[1] *Archives Parlementaires.* Sitting of September 13, 1807.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PLOT OF THE ESCURIAL.—JUNOT IN PORTUGAL, AND NAPOLEON IN ITALY.—(*October* 1807—*January* 1808.)

We left Junot and his army entering Spain, with orders to invade Portugal and take possession of it for Napoleon, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty of Fontainebleau, which had been violated directly it was concluded. We have seen him cross these friendly countries, everywhere making plans on his way for unknown operations, while a second army of forty thousand men had assembled on the frontier of Spain. These threatening indications of Napoleon's intentions with regard to the Court of Madrid, though not yet known, were at the same time confirmed by the steps of our ambassador, Beauharnais, which gave them an additional meaning and throw a fresh light on history. Beauharnais, who had succeeded General Beurnonville at Madrid, was a former member of the Constituent, an old soldier of Condé's army, and brother to Josephine's first husband. A simple and loyal mind, full of illusion and good intention, perfectly capable of yielding to generous impulses, this ambassador was the last man to penetrate the calculations of the policy that he was about to serve. It was for this very reason that he had been chosen, for his straightforwardness inspired confidence, and Napoleon, who always liked zealous servants, did not care for them to be too clear-sighted. He wanted a devoted and notoriously honourable agent at Madrid,

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whose perspicacity would never become inconvenient, and who would deceive others the more easily, because he would himself be the first deceived. That he recognised Beauharnais as the man who best united these requirements, when he appointed him ambassador in the month of March, 1807, is scarcely to be supposed; but what is certain is, that either by chance or by design, he had in him the person that he needed, that he made him play this part, and that he would not easily have found a man better fitted for it by his good qualities as well as by his faults. The most fertile mind is necessarily limited in its contrivances. Both in war and in politics Napoleon repeated his stratagems so often that his method might be reduced to a certain number of invariable proceedings. On this occasion he was his own plagiarist. The getting up of the Spanish affair presents a striking analogy to that of Venice, and Beauharnais was about to accept the same mission to the Court of Madrid that Villetard had accomplished in 1797 to the Venetian Republic, with no less blindness and trust. There is a certain kind of work that in general is only given to discredited agents; the rare art consists in getting it performed by honourable men.

As soon as Beauharnais arrived at Madrid, he became the centre of the innumerable intrigues of a weak and divided Court, for whom Napoleon's representative was a formidable man whose influence must be gained. Between an unpopular favourite, hateful to the nation on account of his levity and his complaisance towards the foreigner, hateful to Napoleon by his inclination to revolt, and a young prince, who as yet was only known by his antipathy to this same favourite, the preference of the ambassador could not be doubtful, and his instructions were not of a nature to change his disposition. All his sympathy would naturally be given to the Prince of the Asturias, were it only out of opposition to the Prince of the Peace, maintaining however that reserve which his office commanded. The internal divisions of the Court of Spain had recently assumed a character of extreme animosity, as is always the case when such dissensions find an aliment in national passions and real

troubles. After useless efforts to disarm and gain the Prince of the Asturias by making him wed his own sister-in-law, Donna Maria Luisa de Bourbon, Manuel Godoy had thought of nothing more than turning the royal favour to advantage for the increase of his own power, in order to place himself in a position to make his own conditions at a given moment, and render the hatred of his enemies as powerless in the future as it was in the present. Hence the new dignities which he had in some sort conferred on himself, the title of Highness, the office of grand admiral, of colonel-general of the king's military household, and that Principality of the Algarves in Portugal, which he had obtained by the treaty of Fontainebleau as a safe refuge from the expected persecution. These precautions, of which the meaning was clear to every one, and magnified by rumours which estimated the wealth that he had accumulated at enormous sums, had only exasperated the adversaries of the Prince of the Peace and increased the indignation of the people. It was currently reported that he had gone so far as to wish to change the order of succession to the throne, and had even dreamed of a change of dynasty.

While he was doing everything to strengthen his position and add something more to that insolent fortune which excited so much envy, his supposed victim, the Prince of the Asturias, was living in retirement and isolation, with affected sadness, an object of suspicion to his own family and in almost open hostility to the king, his father. He was carrying on secret intrigues with all malcontents, offering to the ambitious the perspective of the favours of a new reign, and to the people the chimerical hope of seeing humiliated Spain regenerated. In reality the contest was not between Charles IV and his son the Prince of the Asturias, but between two favourites, one of whom, Manuel Godoy, was the favourite of the father, and the other Juan Escoiquiz, the favourite of the son. This canon, the former tutor of the Prince of the Asturias, was an ambitious and conceited man, of much literary fatuity, who revealed his quality by translating first Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and then *Monsieur Botte* by Pigault Lebrun. Of a reckless activity, that was

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concealed under ecclesiastical gravity, of a narrow mind though not devoid of a certain finesse, ignorant of the world and of its affairs, but convinced that a knowledge of books gave him a knowledge of men, Escoiquiz only looked upon the office that he held near the heir to the crown as an easy means of acquiring an influence over his pupil. He hoped some day to play the same part under the reign of Ferdinand that Godoy was playing under the reign of Charles. Though banished to Toledo after his first intrigues, the crafty canon had returned to Madrid in the month of March, 1807, and had resumed his plots with an activity that was quickened by a desire for vengeance.

Escoiquiz was not long in learning the feelings of Beauharnais, and resolved to turn them to account for the Prince of the Asturias. He knew that the king and the court trembled before Napoleon. If he could gain so powerful a protection, the credit of the favourite, already shaken with the nation, and no longer sustained by the foolish infatuation of the queen and the blindness of the king, would be forced to yield to so many united influences. The means of gaining Napoleon's friendship was very simple, according to the canon. The Emperor of the French had shown himself very partial to royal alliances; it was therefore only requisite to ask him for the hand of a princess of imperial blood for the Prince of the Asturias. Escoiquiz accordingly called on the ambassador of France in the month of July, 1807, and in this first interview communicated to him the singular request. Beauharnais, delighted with the demand, but rightly fearing lest he should compromise himself,—so unusual was such a step on the part of the heir apparent to a throne without the knowledge of his father,—promised to refer the matter to his Government. He did in part transmit this demand, first in obscure terms, then with the clearest and most circumstantial particulars. Napoleon ordered him to encourage these overtures, but to say that they were too vague for him to enter into any formal engagement. Beauharnais accordingly continued his mysterious interviews with Escoiquiz, and tried to induce him to go a step further. He continued

them not only with the authorization of the Emperor, but by his express command. And Napoleon was so anxious that Beauharnais should be deceived, in order to render his language more persuasive, that he left him in ignorance of the conclusion of the treaty of Fontainebleau, which was an unheard-of thing, without a precedent in diplomacy. If he had divulged the personal advantages which this treaty conferred on Godoy, by the retrocession of the Algarves, he would have put an end to the advances which the ambassador was making to Ferdinand; he would have disclosed the perfidy of this double dealing, to which Beauharnais would certainly have refused any longer to lend himself. It appears however that Napoleon, ashamed of employing his agent in such intrigues, or rather fearing to find himself compromised, at one time entertained the idea of forbidding Beauharnais to go any further. There exists, in fact, a letter addressed to Champagny, in which the Emperor expresses his strong disapprobation at the measures, which he had himself advised, and his dread of seeing his ambassador fall into the snare that had been laid for him.[1] But this letter was either only a disavowal in anticipation of failure, or it was cancelled by subsequent instructions; for Beauharnais, instead of putting an end to this dangerous negotiation, carried it on more vigorously than ever, and carried it on with the authorization of his Government. He had already by his perseverance freed it from all the vagueness with which Napoleon had at first found fault. The 30th of September he complained that he had only verbal promises; he required guarantees before he went any further in this affair. On the 12th of October he at length received through Escoiquiz a kind of petition addressed to the Emperor of the French, dated the 11th, and signed by the Prince of the Asturias. The young prince lifted up his voice to 'the hero who cast into oblivion all those who had preceded him,' and after having depicted the state of oppression in which he lived, implored 'his paternal protection,' and begged 'to be allowed the honour of allying himself with the imperial family.'

[1] Dated October 7, 1807.

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It is unnecessary to point out the gravity of such steps under a monarchical government. The demand in marriage, however disrespectful of paternal rights it may have been, was nothing in comparison with this denunciation of a father by his son, and the appeal to the intervention of a foreign sovereign. This letter, read in conjunction with other documents of a still more compromising nature, which were drawn up at the same time by the counsellors of the Prince of the Asturias, who were shortly after to be arrested in his house, constitute a regular conspiracy, if not against the king himself, at any rate against his Government.

Such was the precise point to which Napoleon brought the affairs of Spain at the time of the signing of the treaty of Fontainebleau. While his troops were crossing the territory of the Peninsula, with formal orders not to fulfil any of the conditions of the treaty, or were assembling on the frontier on the pretext of causing it to be respected, his agents at Madrid were secretly encouraging the son to revolt against his father. Ready to take advantage of their intrigues, which he directed, and henceforth possessor of this important document, in which his justice was implored, he quietly waited for a favourable opportunity. He could, by choosing his time, interfere as the knightly protector of innocence, or the avenger of the disregarded rights of royal and paternal authority. The situation was admirably prepared for his entrance on the scene, and if, as those maintain who see no connection between these different events, chance alone produced opportunities so ingeniously combined, we are forced to admit that chance not only strangely favoured him, but also displayed remarkable art in doing so.

Napoleon was, however, obliged to decide what course he would pursue rather sooner than he had expected, in consequence of an event that may be easily understood in the state of discord which then reigned at the Court of Madrid. The Prince of the Asturias was closely watched. It was noticed that he spent his nights in writing, and that he secretly kept up a very active correspondence. The king, whose suspicions were already roused, had his papers suddenly seized on the 28th

of October, and the following day, the 29th, he ordered him to surrender his sword, and constituted him a prisoner in his apartments of the Escurial. The papers that were seized comprised, first, a memorial, in his own handwriting, in which he denounced to the king a supposed conspiracy of the Prince of the Peace; who according to him, had conceived the project of exterminating the whole of the royal family in order to open himself a way to the throne; secondly, a memorial of Escoiquiz in support of the demand in marriage of a French princess; lastly, a cipher destined for the correspondence of the prince. The memorial of Ferdinand contained in covert terms a very clear allusion to the queen's connection with the Prince of the Peace. This revelation, so abominable on the part of a son, bore, we must admit, a striking analogy to the denunciation which Napoleon had himself made to the king some years before. The king, moreover, was treated with the greatest respect in these different documents, and there is nothing in them which indicates that the authors had thought of making an attempt on his life. But the queen was represented as the accomplice of the favourite, and Ferdinand's avowals soon caused the discovery of a far more serious offence against the king himself. It was a decree written and signed by the Prince of the Asturias, but with the date in blank, in which he authorized the Duke de l'Infantado to take the military command of New Castille, after the death of the king, his father. What was the meaning of such an order, and what explanation could be given of it? The prince alleged a short illness which the king had had some time before, and his wish to have every thing prepared in case of his death. But when a man makes preparations for such a misfortune, he is not far from wishing for it; and this act was of a kind to receive still more unfavourable interpretations.

The credulous Charles IV, exaggerating the importance of these criminal intrigues, and excited by the queen, whose irritation may be easily conceived, since she was outraged both as a woman and as a sovereign, persuaded himself that he had just escaped a regular conspiracy against his crown and his life.

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He publicly denounced the culprit in a proclamation addressed to the Spanish people, and announced that he was going to commence proceedings against him as well as his accomplices. He so little suspected that Napoleon could have anything to do with these plots, that he wrote to him as a friend, and with touching simplicity informed him of the sorrow that afflicted him. He notified to him his intention of punishing the prince by revoking the law which called him to the succession to the throne. In conclusion he besought him 'to assist him with his understanding and his counsels.'

This letter was dated October 29, 1807. The next day the king wrote a second, which has not been published but of which the existence is certain, complaining of Beauharnais, of whose intrigues he was as yet only partially aware.[1] Napoleon was still at Fontainebleau, and could not consequently have received it, together with the accounts of the scenes at the Escurial, before the 7th or 8th of November. He had prepared everything for the invasion of Spain—the troops as well as the pretexts. This sudden event, however, had forestalled his expectations.

We see by one of his letters to Clarke, minister of war, dated November 3rd, that the second corps of observation of the Gironde, commanded by Dupont, would not be ready for action before the 1st of December. The letters of the King of Spain, and the news which he received from Madrid, made him suddenly alter his resolutions. This change of mind took place between the 8th and 11th of November. He believed that his whole plan was unmasked; he overwhelmed Masserano, the *official* ambassador of the Court of Madrid with threats; and declared that since they had dared to calumniate Beauharnais, he should march against Spain. At the same time he wrote two long letters to Clarke. In the first he directed him to hasten the departure of Dupont and his regiments. There were to be no halting-places; they were to pass on without stopping anywhere. Clarke was to order *with the greatest secrecy*

[1] See in the collection of documents published by Llorente, Izquierdo's letters to Godoy, dated November 16 and 17, 1807.

the immediate arming of all the towns on the frontier of Spain; he was to send large quantities of supplies even to places in the *Eastern Pyrenees*. 'These supplies, which will be seen there,' he wrote, 'must be said to be for the army of the Gironde.' But this army of the Gironde, which followed so closely Junot's corps, no longer appeared to him sufficient, and he wrote to Clarke another letter, still more urgent than the first. He wished a third army to be formed out of regiments drafted from the depots on the banks of the Rhine, and sent to the Spanish frontier under the name of *Corps of Observation of the Ocean*. In order that this movement might be effected with the greatest rapidity, Clarke was to send off troops *by post* from Metz, from Nancy, and from Sedan, towards Bordeaux. All the available troops that remained of cavalry, cuirassiers, chasseurs, dragoons, and hussars, Napoleon sent to the Pyrenees, and it was no longer Dupont's corps, but this new army that was to be on the Spanish frontier by the 1st of December. 'You will direct the generals,' he wrote to Clarke, 'to issue proclamations to encourage the soldiers, and explain to them the necessity of quick marches, in *order to go to the relief of the army of Portugal, which is threatened by the landing of an English army.*'[1] At the same time he made the hundred thousand men who occupied Germany execute a retrograde movement, so as to have them near at hand. He recalled a portion of them to France; the others were brought back from the Vistula to the Elbe and the Oder.

This extraordinary haste clearly proves that Napoleon had from the first moment conceived the plan, which he afterwards carried out, of presenting himself to Spain as the supreme arbiter between Charles IV and his son. Armed with the letter of the son invoking his protection, and the letter from the father accusing his son, he felt that the opportunity was come for interference; and he seized it with feverish impatience. Nevertheless, the following day, the 12th of November, *at four o'clock in the morning* he again wrote to Clarke, but in a very different way: 'If the orders which I gave you in my letter of

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, November 11, 1807.

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yesterday,' he said, 'for the departure of the troops in station, have not been executed, I desire that you countermand them. . . . . Circumstances have changed, and there is now much less need of haste.'

Thus at the moment of falling upon his prey, Napoleon hesitated and drew back. What had caused him to alter his mind? The whole explanation of this sudden change is to be found in the fresh incidents which had just taken place at Madrid. The moral perplexity of a man who stops at the moment of acting, had nothing whatever to do with it. The Prince of the Asturias, terrified at the possible consequences of the king's anger and the prospect of the criminal trial, had betrayed his accomplices, with the ingratitude common to men of his rank; at the same time he made disclosures which might have ruined him, but which in reality saved him. In denouncing the Duke de l'Infantado and Escoiquiz, he had related the interview of the latter with the French ambassador, the project that he had formed of asking a princess of the imperial blood in marriage, and the formal demand which by Beauharnais's advice he had addressed to Napoleon. Dismayed at unexpectedly finding the Emperor's hand in intrigues which no one thought he was connected with, the Prince of the Peace, who knew by terrible experience what it might cost him to wound Napoleon's pride, immediately resolved to hush up the affair and to stop the proceedings against the heir to the crown, in order to deprive the Emperor of all pretext for interference. But by an unfortunate inconsistency, while he pardoned the principal culprit, he persisted in prosecuting the accomplices, either because he felt that a general amnesty would be impossible after all the publicity that had been given to the conspiracy, or because he could not bring himself to lose this opportunity of striking his sworn enemies. He dictated two letters to Ferdinand, in which the young prince implored the pardon of his parents; both of these he published in a royal decree, by which the king declared that he had forgiven his son out of regard to his repentance and the prayers of the queen.

With regard to the other persons accused, they were all to be

brought to trial. But the Marquis de Caballero, minister of justice, had orders to keep back everything in the proceedings that might compromise the French ambassador. Godoy had so great an interest in sparing Napoleon, under these critical circumstances he experienced so much terror at the mere idea of again incurring the anger of so dangerous an enemy, that it would be useless to look further for the secret of his readiness to put an end to the proceedings. Those who say that he was deterred by the outburst of public opinion, forget first that this outburst was not displayed till much later, and secondly that the best means of justifying himself, after having commenced proceedings, was to continue them. Moreover, a despatch from Izquierdo a few days later confirmed him in his intentions. 'M. de Champagny had informed him,' he said, 'of the Emperor's commands, that on no pretext was anything to be published in this affair which might have any connection whatever either with the Emperor or with his ambassador. "And if Beauharnais is found guilty," asked Izquierdo, "is the action to be suspended to the scandal of the nation?" "Do not argue," replied Champagny, "such is the order of his Majesty. *You have only to obey.*" '—Despatch of the 17th of November.

This significant injunction proved to Manuel Godoy that he had judged rightly. He obeyed it scrupulously. In the proceedings instituted against Ferdinand's friends, Escoiquiz and the dukes de l'Infantado and San Carlos, there was not a single allusion to the part which the French ambassador had taken in these events. The judges displayed their sense of justice by refusing to condemn the accomplices when the principal culprit had been absolved; they acquitted them in spite of the heavy charges that were brought against them, in spite of the declared hostility of the king, in spite of the threats of a vindictive queen. The courageous conduct of these magistrates shows in a striking manner that, however low Spain had then sunk, examples of honour and civic virtue might still be found, such as we might seek for in vain in France during the reign of Napoleon.

In consequence of Godoy's skilful conduct the blow had

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failed, and the scheme was postponed. What was Napoleon going to do? If, as has so often been stated, he had been dissatisfied at seeing his ambassador take part in these intrigues, he would doubtless recall him and disavow his acts, as the King of Spain so urgently demanded. Nothing of the kind. He had more than ever need of his blind confidence and of his hatred of the Prince of the Peace. He left him at Madrid to pursue his work of discord, and he wrote a letter to the King of Spain to tranquillize him.

'Sir, my brother,' he wrote, 'I ought in truth to inform your Majesty, *that I have never received any letter from the Prince of the Asturias*, that neither directly nor indirectly *have I ever heard him spoken of*, so that I might truthfully say *I am in ignorance of his existence.*' Admirable generosity, say some, as if he had not an interest in saving the prince, as if it were not his best card to play! He goes on to speak of Portugal; all his thoughts are occupied by this expedition; it is the only important thing; it leaves him no time to enter into the household quarrels of his ally, and the king ought to think of pushing it on more vigorously. '*Palace disputes*, though doubtless very distressing to a feeling father, can have no influence over general affairs. . . . He hopes that his Majesty has found some consolation in the anxieties which beset him, for no one is more warmly attached to him than himself.'[1] He trusted this letter to his chamberlain, De Tournon, a discreet man, of a penetrating and observant mind. He gave him as his mission 'to find out on his way what was the opinion of the country on what had just taken place, if it was in favour of the Prince of the Asturias, or of the Prince of the Peace. *You will also ascertain*,' he continued, '*without appearing to do so, what is the state of the fortifications of Pampeluna and Fontarabia.* . . . You will obtain very exact information *about the Spanish army*, about the places that *they occupy at present*,' &c.[2]

The same day, the 13th of November, he decided upon an act far graver and more decisive than anything that he had

[1] Napoleon to the King of Spain, November 13, 1807.
[2] Napoleon to M. de Tournon, November 13.

hitherto done. He charged Clarke to order Dupont to cross the frontier with that second army which, according to the treaty signed a fortnight before, was not to enter Spain without the consent of the king.[1] He stopped the departure of the troops in station, for his plan was modified. Since Charles had pardoned his son, he could no longer interfere to release the oppressed prince; but he would allege the necessity of relieving the army of Portugal, which no one threatened. In the excited state of opinion, fresh events would speedily furnish him with the pretext that he needed. Ferdinand, whom Napoleon seemed to wish to defend against his father, whom he cleared of the accusation of corresponding with a foreigner, whom he encouraged through Beauharnais, would believe that he was upheld by him and inevitably think of revenge. If this expected incident did not happen, a hundred others might arise out of the mere presence of foreign troops on Spanish territory. He accordingly ordered Dupont to enter Spain, but not to go beyond Vittoria; from thence the general was to send officers in all directions to study the country.[2]

While this operation, apparently almost insignificant, in reality so formidable, was quietly being effected, Napoleon wished to appear to know nothing about it, or at any rate not to attach any importance to it. He therefore started for Italy, announcing his journey with great parade. He arranged to make his triumphal entry into Milan the very day that Dupont was stealthily to penetrate into Spain. How was it possible to believe that this man, wholly occupied in receiving festivities, ovations, and the acclamations of his good people of Italy, was preparing to deal a treacherous blow to the Spanish monarchy? If his troops violated the Spanish territory, it was doubtless through some mistake, some misunderstood order. The Spanish ambassador would necessarily defer his complaints till a more convenient opportunity; just then the Emperor was too far away, and too much absorbed to listen to them. And during this time our troops continued to enter; they poured into the Spanish provinces. Napoleon followed them

[1] To Clarke the same day. [2] To Clarke.

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with his eye; it was he who fixed their halting-places, though seemingly wholly engrossed with the affairs of Italy and the happiness of his peoples. Thanks to the distance, he was spared all importunate questions till he was ready to throw off the mask. This journey to Italy was in itself a stroke of genius. Napoleon's apologists, who see nothing more in it than his desire to indulge in family intercourse with his brothers Joseph and Lucien, and 'to embrace his beloved son,' Prince Eugène, have very little appreciation of a mind so fertile in contriving schemes. How can they so completely fail to recognise his genius? Napoleon publicly starting for Italy, just as his soldiers were invading Spain, is the same man as Napoleon shutting himself up in Malmaison at the time that the Duke of Enghien was brought to Paris. It was Napoleon who remained in Italy when he believed that his fleets were assembling in the Channel to attack England; it was Napoleon who lingered at Boulogne, while his army debouched from the valley of the Danube to attack Austria. This is the man to the life. We might bring forward a hundred other examples of the same kind. Never was a man more consistent, and those who substitute for his best conceived calculations either chance or motives of a foolish sentimentality, which he would have repudiated with contempt, strangely diminish the force and energy of his character. We protest, in the name of the hero himself, against the open-mouthed lyricism which spoils this masterpiece of knavery and calculation.

Junot, stimulated and harassed by Napoleon, who desired above all things to surprise and capture the Portuguese fleet, pursued his journey to Lisbon. His wearied soldiers were scarcely able to carry their arms. 'I will not have Junot's march delayed a single day under pretence of want of provisions,' wrote the Emperor; 'this excuse is only good for those who will do nothing. Twenty thousand men can live anywhere, even in the desert.' (November 5.) Junot who, for some time had been very harshly treated by Napoleon, and who saw in this expedition an opportunity of regaining his

favour, resolved to obey these difficult orders at any price. His troops were almost entirely composed of young soldiers, who for the most part had not yet reached the age required for military service, but had been drawn a year before the time. It was with these inexperienced youths, incapable of bearing long marches, that Junot was according to Napoleon's calculations in thirty-five days to traverse the country between Bayonne and Lisbon, over mountains and bad roads, across open deserts, and through a poor, hostile, half-savage population, without provisions, and without resources of any kind. He had entered Spain on the 17th of October, and had arrived at Salamanca at the beginning of November, having already left behind him a great number of stragglers. He set out again on the 12th of November, taking the route to Ciudad Rodrigo, and then through the desolate passes of Moraleja, plundering everything on his way to save his troops from dying of hunger, and abandoning on the road the soldiers that were attenuated by fatigue and privations, and who fell with the first stab of the knife of the inhabitants. At Alcantara he found some supplies, and was able to repose and recruit his men. On leaving Alcantara he took the right bank of the Tagus, but the road was steeper and worse than ever. This road, which passes over a number of abrupt spurs, that run out from the mountains of Beira and slope down to the river, presented an almost uninterrupted series of ravines, which the heavy rains had rendered impassable by changing every stream into a torrent. These fresh obstacles did not stop Junot's march. The general's mind seemed bent on one object, that of reaching Lisbon, and he cared little about leaving his army by the way, provided that he himself arrived on the appointed day. He accordingly pursued his breathless course, followed by four or five thousand men that more resembled spectres than soldiers; their clothes in rags, their arms broken, their feet bleeding, without shoes, without artillery, without baggage, in the greatest confusion; and it was in this deplorable and ridiculous plight that he appeared before Lisbon on the morning of the 30th of November. He arrived there at the exact time that Napoleon

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had fixed; but if he had found in the Portuguese army a handful of resolute men to attack his phantom legion, not one of our soldiers would have survived this mad march. Fortunately for Junot and for our troops, the prestige of the great army covered their weakness.[1]

Just as the heads of the column of the French troops appeared before Lisbon, the Portuguese fleet which had been detained several days by contrary winds, set sail for Brazil, carrying away the regent, his mother, and all the royal family, and with them all the friends and servants who wished to share their fortune, in all from seven to eight thousand persons who went to seek a new country beyond the seas. The regent, a prince adored by his subjects for the goodness and the mildness of his administration, had not determined upon this painful exile without great anguish. He would willingly have spared the trial to so many inoffensive sufferers, who hardly knew by name the author of their troubles. Again he strove to appease Napoleon; he declared that he was ready to make all the concessions demanded, even those relative to the confiscation of property and the arrest of persons. All this was useless. His ambassador, Marialva, was not even allowed to put his foot on French territory.

One thing alone was required of him,—this was his kingdom. On the 27th of November, a cold and rainy day, he left the palace of Ajuda, surrounded by his family, in the midst of an excited crowd that saluted him with blessings and tears. By his side, a living image of misfortune, was the queen, his mother, who for a long time afflicted with insanity, and suddenly brought into the noise and tumult out of doors, looked wildly around her as if she were seeking an explanation of this scene of desolation. The embarkation took place in the midst of a gloomy sadness, under the protection of the English squadron, commanded by Sir Sidney Smith. The fleet set sail just as our balls were about to reach it. These hundreds of innocent beings, whose only crime was that of having excited the cupidity of a pitiless conqueror, were going to brave a

[1] General Foy: *Histoire des Guerres de la Péninsule.*

thousand dangers, to seek an uncertain and precarious retreat beyond the seas, abandoning their property, their homes, their relatives, their friends, and most of them breaking up the sacred ties that bound them to their country. Never, since the Roman proscriptions, had the picture drawn by Tacitus appeared truer: *Mare exiliis plenum.* And the man who, in order to satisfy an inordinate desire, had reduced to this miserable condition such a number of unfortunate beings of whom he had never had to complain, was satisfied; he was tranquil; he was glorious; men called him Great!

Junot peaceably established himself at Lisbon, where he gradually rallied the rest of his army. He then took possession of the whole of Portugal without striking a blow, only leaving to the two auxiliary corps of Solana and Taranco the part of spectators. Of a restless but kind and generous disposition, Junot would have desired nothing better than to make the Portuguese insensibly forget the disasters of their country by his mild administration; but he had to carry out the orders of an inexorable master, who only believed in the rule of fear. Napoleon reproached him for his clemency, as if it had been treason. He was impatient to seize upon the spoils of this unfortunate and defenceless little people. 'The hope that you have conceived of commerce and prosperity,' wrote the Emperor to him, 'is a delusive dream, which lulls you into security. What commerce can you have in a country that is blockaded, and whose situation is so uncertain as that of Portugal?' It was therefore requisite to confiscate, to imprison, to exile, and to levy heavy contributions. He received orders to disarm and transport to France all the Portuguese troops, and with them all persons suspected of having preserved any attachment to the royal family.[1] Junot hoped these pitiless measures would end here, but Napoleon sent him a decree ready drawn up, and dated from Milan, which was about to complete the ruin and distress of the Portuguese people. This decree levied a fresh contribution on Portugal amounting to a hundred million of francs, to *be used*, said Napoleon, *for the purchase of all property*

[1] Napoleon to Junot, December 20.

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of whatever kind belonging to private individuals.[1] After this decree, which represented all private estates as belonging of right to the Emperor of the French, it was superfluous to add that all the domains of the crown, of the princes, and of the nobles who had emigrated, were his property, as well as the public revenues. It naturally followed, also, that the Corps of Occupation would henceforth be maintained at the expense of the people whom they had to oppress, and would receive additional perquisites besides, amounting to the half of their pay. (Art. 9.) In consequence of this frightful spoliation, weighing upon a nation of three millions of souls, who were deprived at the same time of their colonies, their commerce, and the sources of their wealth, the kingdom was, as it were, destroyed at a single blow. But what in all this imperial and royal decree perhaps best expressed the spirit that pervaded our conquests, was a short article worded thus: 'After the 1st of December of the present year, *a bottle of wine will be given to each man in our army of Portugal*, independent of the regular rations *required* by our ordinances.' (Art. 8.) Historians have vied with each other in extolling the grandeur of these words: 'The house of Braganza has ceased to reign!' A pretentious and declamatory assertion, intended to cover a base and contemptible act. The bottle of wine is less epic, but it brings the truth before us. Napoleon always talked of glory, even in reference to exploits that were nothing more than acts of robbery, but he reckoned still more on the powerful spring of new heroism—cupidity and covetousness.

The Court of Spain, seeing the contempt that was manifested in Portugal for the clearest and most positive engagements, began to understand that some extraordinary surprise was preparing, of which their country might very possibly be the victim. They were therefore anxious to compel Napoleon to explain his intentions, and if possible to disarm him, by offering him a fresh pledge of their docility and their eagerness to satisfy him. In spite of the Emperor's denial in regard to the marriage demand of the Prince of the Asturias, there were a

[1] Decree of December 23, 1807. Art. 1.

thousand indubitable proofs that he had encouraged it, if he had not suggested it. They consequently resolved to renew the proposal, making it this time in the name of the crown and with all the usual formalities. King Charles wrote in the most flattering terms soliciting the alliance as a favour for his house. A short time after, he wrote a second letter, requesting the execution and publication of the Treaty of Fontainebleau, of which Junot was so regardless in Portugal. This twofold step was extremely skilful, for it deprived Napoleon of the shadow of a pretext for complaining of Spain. But the Court of Madrid was too feeble, too irresolute, and too much the dupe of fears as well as of hopes to escape the snare. Napoleon, in evident embarrassment, took refuge in silence. It was exactly to escape demands of this kind that he had gone to Italy; but following his constant method of reserving all the chances that presented themselves, so as to choose the most advantageous, he wished to place himself in a position to accept the proposition of the King of Spain, if necessity required it. Among the various plans which he turned over in his mind, there was one on which he often dwelt; it was the idea of placing his brother Lucien upon the throne of Portugal, if Lucien would only consent to repudiate the wife for whom he had sacrificed the favour of the First Consul. Lucien had a daughter by his first marriage, who was of an age to settle, and Napoleon had for some time been thinking of having her married.[1] This daughter of Lucien might, if circumstances had rendered it necessary, be made the pledge of a new alliance between Napoleon and the house of Spain. In that case, the throne of Portugal for Lucien, and in all probability the cession to France of the Spanish provinces situated north of the Ebro, would become the price of the immense honour that the Bonapartes would have conferred upon the Bourbons.

Lucien's haughty and inflexible refusal to comply with his brother's demands, soon caused this plan to be abandoned. It would, moreover, have been completely changed in the execution; for if it was easy to give the throne of Portugal to Lucien,

[1] This is clear from a letter from Elisa to Lucien, dated June 20, 1807.

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the cession of the provinces of the Ebro to Napoleon would certainly have resulted in bringing affairs into the state in which we find them later. After an interview of some hours at Mantua, the two brothers separated, irritated and dissatisfied with each other.[1] Napoleon insisted on having, as he said, Lucien's daughter 'at his disposal,' and Lucien consented to send her to Paris. 'Lucien,' wrote Napoleon to Joseph, 'appeared to me to be struggling with a multitude of contrary sentiments, and not to have sufficient strength of character to make a decision. I have exhausted all the means in my power to induce him to employ his talents for me, and for the country. If he intends to send me his daughter, she must start without delay, and he must give me a declaration that he places her entirely at my disposal, for there is not a moment to be lost, events are hurrying on, and *my destiny must be fulfilled.*' (Dec. 17.) Lucien's daughter did start for Paris; but Lucien persisted in refusing a crown which would have cost him his domestic happiness. It is clear that the girl was nothing more than the fancy and toy of a disordered imagination. Napoleon had given up his project of marriage before she reached Paris.

The Emperor quitted Italy, after having visited Milan, Venice, and Turin, all of which places gave him a magnificent reception. Wishing to work upon the patriotic feelings of the Italians, he officially adopted Eugène as his son, and named him as his successor to the crown of Italy. The people were bidden to rejoice over this ceremony, which was supposed to be the pledge of the future independence of the nation. In the meantime, he did not restore to them even the shadow of the Legislative Body, of which they had been deprived since 1805. He contented himself with substituting for it an assembly of clerks, instituted under the name of Consulting Senate. On his way he left various plans for public works. Many of these were schemes that were not serious, but merely intended to dazzle the imagination of the people; some, however, were for the improvement of roads, of canals, and especially of fortifications, an object which he never lost sight of. He voted several

[1] See the *Mémoires du roi Joseph.*

millions for the port of Venice, but it was no longer in his power to repair the ruins he had made. Venice was a dead town, and he who had destroyed life there was incapable of restoring it. The works which he commanded to be begun were never completed.[1] He gave orders for the creation of a commune on the uninhabited plateau of Mont Cenis, and promised all kinds of favours and exemption from taxes to the unfortunate beings who would consent to settle in it. A hospital, a barrack, a prison—these formed the centre of attraction to the future colony, which was to be placed on the same footing as communes of *more than five thousand inhabitants*.[2] In spite of the *fiat lux* of this almighty will, nature dared to disobey. The barrack is there, the prison is there, the hospital is there, but no one ever came to live on these inhospitable heights. Of the pompous decree of Napoleon not a trace is to be found, beyond a few small houses built to shelter the men that work on the roads.

Napoleon also dated from Milan a decree which greatly increased the distress caused by the Continental blockade, and which was a worthy appendage to the extravagant decree of Berlin. The excuse for this act was an order of the Admiralty, which was scarcely less arbitrary or less iniquitous than the measures of Napoleon himself. For these measures England had retaliated by adopting a system upon the seas, almost as oppressive as that which he was carrying on upon the Continent. By this order of November 11, 1807, the British Cabinet had compelled all neutral vessels trading with France or with her allies to put in at an English port, and pay a fixed toll. This tyrannical tax might be enforced temporarily, but it was certain sooner or later to exasperate all Powers that had any sense of their dignity and their interests, especially the United States, a proud young state that was not of a temper to bear such insults for any length of time. But Napoleon replied to this measure in a way that was calculated to turn against France all the discontent from which she might have derived advantage.

[1] Comte Sclopis: *La domination Française en Italie, de* 1800 *à* 1815.

[2] Decree of December 27, 1807. Articles 24 and 33.

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To this clumsy provocation, which enraged those whom England had an interest in conciliating, in order to gain them to her cause, he retorted by an act a thousand times more foolish, by decreeing 'that every vessel, to whatever nation it might belong,' which had submitted to the right of search by the English, should by the mere fact be *denationalized*, and be declared a *lawful prize*. And the execution of this decree, which it was far easier to publish than to carry into effect, was left to his ships of war and his corsairs. This arrogant menace obliged him, in reality, to capture all the neutral vessels that remained in the world. But there was this great difference between England and himself: she *could* exercise her right of search, while he was incapable of carrying out his threats. This was not a political act; it was nothing more than a schoolboy declamation. Unhappily, it was not the less disastrous because it was ridiculous.

Napoleon had returned to Paris the 3rd of January, 1808. It was not till the 10th of January that he replied to the letter from the King of Spain of the 18th of November. He declared that he was as desirous as the king himself to strengthen the bonds between the two states, and *willingly consented* to the marriage of the Prince of the Asturias with a princess of France. But he was suddenly assailed by scruples respecting this prince, whose defender he had been at the time when his father had accused him. He no longer appeared to consider him as a slandered man; he asked to be enlightened. 'Your Majesty,' he said, 'must understand, that no honourable man would like to ally himself with a *dishonoured son*, without being assured that he had regained the good graces of his father.' As if the step that the king had taken was not sufficient proof of this! With regard to the proposition to publish the Treaty of Fontainebleau, he rejected it as inopportune and premature. It would in reality have fettered him, for utter insensibility to dishonour is incompatible with openness and publicity. It would, too, have enlightened the Spanish people, who throughout the course of the national crisis showed themselves so superior to their rulers in good sense and perspicacity.

Napoleon had avoided entering on the affairs of Rome during his sojourn in Italy, but he had long before desired to put an end to the opposition of the Pope. He took advantage of his return to Paris to complete the invasion of the Roman States, of which he had at different intervals occupied several provinces. On the 16th of January he sent orders to Generals Miollis and Lemarois, the one starting from Milan, the other from Naples, to combine their march in such a manner as to enter the Pontifical States together. Miollis, who was the real chief of the expedition, was to march upon Rome, '*under pretence of crossing the town on his road to Naples.*'[1] Once master of the town, he was to take possession of the castle of St. Angelo, render all possible honour to the Pope, but declare that his mission was to occupy Rome, *in order to arrest the brigands from the kingdom of Naples* who had taken refuge there. We see that with the weak as with the strong, there was always the same want of openness in the imperial policy. The moment Miollis arrived at the gates of Rome, the ambassador Alquier was to give the Cardinal secretary of state a note in which all the grievances, real or imaginary, of the Emperor against the Court of Rome were set forth. There were fresh complaints of the Neapolitan brigands *dripping with French blood*, of the agents of Queen Caroline, of the agents of England, *who were disturbing the tranquillity of Italy*, &c. Miollis, it declared, would not quit Rome, *till this town was purged* of the enemies of France.[2] A paragraph written in cipher in the despatch contained these words dictated by Napoleon for the instruction of Alquier:

'It is the Emperor's intention by these steps to accustom the people of Rome and the French troops to live together, in order that, should the Court of Rome continue to pursue her mad course, *she may gradually cease to exist as a temporal power, without its being perceived.*' This ingenious plan was the same that Napoleon was employing in Spain. Miollis was to allege sometimes the necessity of marching upon Naples, sometimes

[1] Napoleon to Prince Eugène, January 10, 1808.

[2] To Champagny, January 22.

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that of protecting the rear of the Neapolitan army, which was contradictory, just as the generals who were daily entering Spain were to allege either an order to march upon Cadiz against the English, who were disembarking there, or that of covering the rear of the army of Portugal Thanks to these stratagems, the preliminary movements were effected with astonishing facility; but it was counting too much on the stupidity of men to suppose that the two enterprises could be fully carried out *without their being perceived!* It was, moreover, supremely hazardous and impolitic to run counter to prejudices, to strike the Sovereign Pontiff at the same time that he was attacking a nation whose attachment to the Catholic Church amounted to fanaticism, to complicate a national war by a religious war, to add to the power of patriotic feeling the terrible force of religious passions. The man who did not see this danger, or who, having discovered it, could not put off the petty satisfaction of vengeance, never possessed true political genius.

Napoleon at that time so little suspected the gravity of these two enterprises, which were the rock upon which his fortune split, that he seemed impatient to create other's quarrels, as if his activity had not sufficient aliment. The perseverance of Russia in claiming the execution of the promises of Tilsit relative to the principalities, had irritated him to such a degree that he had almost decided to recommence war against the power. Just at that time, that is to say the 12th of January, 1808, he ordered Champagny to put the following questions to Sebastiani: 'If the Russians are determined to keep Wallachia and Moldavia, is it the intention of the Porte *to make common cause with France in the war?*' What are her means?

His decree from Milan had again caused him to be on very bad terms with the United States. He had had all their vessels seized that had submitted to the search of the English, and in order to avoid a rupture, he was obliged to declare that these vessels were under provisional sequestration, instead of being considered lawful prize. Lastly, he continued his preparations for that great expedition against

Sicily, to which he attached so much importance; he proclaimed the island of Sardinia to be in a state of blockade, as an accomplice of England; he meditated an expedition to re-victual Corfu, another to punish the Dey of Algiers, a third for Martinique and Senegal. In short, he made more plans and projects in a few months than he would have been able to carry out in the course of a long reign.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVOLUTION AT ARANJUEZ. THE TREACHERY OF BAYONNE. (*January—May*, 1808.)

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THE French troops, nevertheless, continued to enter Spain as if no frontier existed. Dupont was followed by Moncey, with thirty thousand men; Moncey, in his turn, by the division of the Eastern Pyrenees sent on from Perpignan to Pampeluna under Duhesme, though this route is not easily to be accounted for by any necessity of covering the army in Portugal. Simultaneously with these movements another division advanced from the other extremity of the Pyrenees, and marched from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port towards Pampeluna, commanded by Darmagnac.

'*Without appearing to do anything*,' wrote Napoleon, 'he will occupy both citadel and fortifications.'[1] Moncey was to push forward from Vittoria to Burgos, and to extend his forces over the country as much as possible, on the plea of causing it less distress. The total number of troops sent into Spain up to that period amounted to 80,000 men, without counting Junot's corps. But this was not sufficient to satisfy Napoleon, and he hastened the march towards the Pyrenees of several select corps and of his own guard commanded by Bessières. To supply by one stroke the gaps caused by their departure, without being obliged to bring back into France his army of occupation in Germany, he ordered a levy of the conscription in anticipation of 1809, as he had done in previous years, and the Senate passed the vote

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, January 28, 1808.

with its customary servility. He urged every one around him to arm. He insisted that Jerome, in his small kingdom of Westphalia, should raise an army of 40,000 men from a population of two millions. 'I have 80,000 men under arms,' he wrote to him, 'and I have just raised 80,000 more.' (January 30.) A report of Champagny's, published in the *Moniteur* dated January 24, explains all these levies and these movements of troops by the necessity of defending the Peninsula against the intended landing of the English in the neighbourhood of Cadiz. A most laudable solicitude truly! if its value is to be tested by the number of soldiers it drew forth. Champagny's report ends by these significant words: 'The whole Peninsula deserves your Majesty's attention.'

But that unfortunate people to whom Napoleon extended this generous protection, experienced ever-increasing difficulty in feeling grateful for it. However thoughtless by nature, or easily deceived, they soon found it impossible to doubt that he was preparing a most dangerous intrigue against Spain and its sovereign. The net with which they were encircled was daily being drawn tighter, and, not daring to break it, their only study was to avoid giving any cause of complaint to their powerful adversary, in the vain hope of making him retire rather than embarrass himself by openly acknowledging his plans. Nor was it without apparent reason that they considered resistance impossible. The Spanish army was dispersed; part was at Hamburg, part in Portugal, where Junot had orders to follow and keep it back; part, along the southern coast where it had been sent at the demand of Napoleon to repel the pretended landing of the English. The remainder, thus reduced, would have been incapable of resisting even one of our corps d'armée. Moreover, how could they receive, with arms in hand, soldiers who presented themselves as allies and brothers? In such a position the best plan, in the opinion of the advisers to the Court of Spain, was to wait until the Emperor's projects became more clear. Perhaps, after all, they were less sinister than was supposed. Could they allow themselves to think that he would be so treacherous as to wish to dethrone a sovereign who had given

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him so many proofs of friendship and confidence? At all events, would there not always be time to take a decided step and fly to America, as the House of Braganza had done, after having called the nation to arms?

Orders were, therefore, issued to the captains-general of the different provinces, to give the most friendly reception to the French troops. But this was an opportunity not to be neglected by the latter, and they at once seized all the strong places and citadels within their reach. Darmagnac at Pampeluna, Duhesme at Monjuich and at Figueras, later Murat himself at St. Sebastian—for the most part acting against their own wishes, but obliged to follow their instructions—set on foot the most shameful schemes in order to obtain possession of those places which they would not have been able to take by force.

These acts, the meaning of which it was difficult to misunderstand, began to alarm the King, the Queen, and the favourite. Napoleon had hitherto mingled so many marks of friendship with his most threatening measures, that doubt and hesitation seemed allowable to minds blinded by a foregone conclusion. Had he not recently sent the King and his favourite a present of fourteen magnificent horses selected from his own stables? But it was no longer possible to close their eyes to the conviction that these pledges of sympathy had only been so many snares; and it suited him that the Court of Madrid should at length understand his designs, since it could no longer thwart them. It suited him that it should take alarm and thus save him the trouble of throwing off the mask and striking the last blow.

To the intimidation produced by the conduct of his troops, he now added threatening language, full of equivocation, and the affected obscurity of which was intended at the same time to betray latent irritation. In consequence of the letter in which Napoleon had shown so little desire to promote the union of an imperial princess to *a dishonoured son*, the poor King had refrained from recurring to the proposal. Napoleon now seemed to treat his silence as a crime. 'Your Majesty,' he wrote to him on the 25th of February, 1808, 'asked me for the

hand of a French princess for the Prince of the Asturias. I answered on the 10th of January, *that I consented to the proposal.* Your Majesty no longer speaks to me of this marriage: all this leaves many objects, most important for the interests of my people, in obscurity. I expect your friendship *to remove every doubt.*' At the same time that he strove to draw the King into this unseemly quarrel, he acted the part of an offended sovereign. He drove Izquierdo, the negotiator of the Fontainebleau treaty, out of Paris, but not until he had made Duroc and Talleyrand suggest to him the project of a new treaty—a genuine diplomatic scarecrow—imposing on Spain the cession of the Ebro provinces in exchange for Portugal and the hand of a French princess. This project, never seriously entertained for an instant, only aimed at bringing to a climax the trouble and perplexity of the Court of Madrid. And it succeeded to perfection, for Izquierdo, who, during two months, had borne countless insults, and had seen with his own eyes the hostile preparations that were being made against his country, carried with him to Madrid the alarm and despair which filled his own heart. At the very moment of his arrival, his opinions were confirmed by an act which intimated that all these preliminary measures were about to be carried into effect, and that, from mere projects, they would now become realities. This act was the appointment of Murat to the command-in-chief of the army in Spain.

Murat started with instructions that were almost purely military. Napoleon advised him to maintain his army in the most perfect order, carefully to establish a system of communication, and to occupy all the important posts he might leave in his rear, but he said nothing of the object of the expedition, preferring to impart the knowledge of his ulterior designs from day to day. Murat was desired to avoid all communication with the Court of Spain until further orders, and to answer all questions from that quarter by silence. His instructions went no further. Napoleon, however, who needed a lieutenant in Spain whose zeal might be stimulated by passions of a more enterprising character than those inspired by simple personal attachment, had done all that

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was necessary, without committing himself by any formal engagement to Murat, to allow his credulous brother-in-law to believe that the Emperor destined him for the Throne of Spain. This conviction had been fostered by half sentences and insinuations of double meaning, which Napoleon reserved to himself the right of explaining later in some unexpected manner. If he had not confided them to Murat, he had at least taken care to let them drop before confidants whom he knew to be incapable of keeping a secret. 'The time will come,' he wrote to Jerome, on January 30, 'whilst allowing him to hope for the Grand Duchy of Berg, that Murat will be placed *elsewhere*.' This 'elsewhere' could evidently only be in Spain. Murat believed it in common with all the Emperor's intimate circle, and if, during his short lieutenancy, he displayed a depth of shrewdness and unscrupulous audacity, seemingly little in keeping with the faculties of his vain and heedless mind, it can only be attributed to the excitement, originating in ambition, which persuaded him that he was working for himself. Murat was deceived and mystified in this affair, as thoroughly as the ambassador Beauharnais, whom he so pleasantly turned into ridicule with his intimate friends.

Murat entered Spain on the 1st of March, and established his head-quarters at Burgos. Thence, by a concentric movement, he slowly pushed his army on towards Madrid. Dupont advanced by Valladolid, Moncey by Aranda, in the hope of being the first to arrive at the summit of the mountains of Guadarrama which command Madrid. When Moncey should have issued from the Somo-Sierra, Dupont was to advance, with the bulk of his force, to Segovia, or to St. Ildefonso, so as to be in a position to support him.[1] Junot received orders to assist this movement by marching on Elvas and Badajoz, where he was told to keep the corps of Solano in check. At the same time, Beauharnais was desired to notify to the Spanish government the approaching arrival at Madrid of two French divisions *going to Cadiz*. He was to spread a report that Napoleon himself would soon pass through the same town for

[1] Napoleon to Murat, March 6 and 9, 1808.

the purpose of *besieging Gibraltar, and going on to Africa.* Finally, he was also instructed to allay the fears of the partisans of the Prince of Peace and of the Prince of the Asturias, and should either one or the other wish to come to Burgos to meet the Emperor on his passage, he was to encourage them to do so.[1]

By his letters of the 14th and 16th of March, Napoleon gave Murat formal orders not only to approach Madrid, but to enter it. At the same time he was told to avoid, with the utmost care, any act of hostility, and to continue to give assurances of the most pacific character. 'Continue to hold peaceful language,' wrote Napoleon to him on the 16th. 'Reassure the King and the Prince of Peace, the Prince of the Asturias, and the Queen. *The principal object is to reach Madrid,* there to rest your troops and replenish your commissariat. Say that I shall soon arrive to arrange and settle affairs.' But, if the Emperor was desirous at all cost to avoid any collision with the Spanish people before he had made himself master of the kingdom, he was not the less anxious to frighten the Court, in order to get rid of it. So well had he calculated the effects which might be expected from this most natural fear, that he had already provided for the possibility of their seeking refuge, either at Seville or Cadiz. Should they take refuge at Seville, as that would only be a temporary expedient, Murat had orders to *leave them in peace,* and even to *show them kindness,*[2] so as not to increase their trouble and distress by this behaviour, which would so clearly be false and deceitful. Should they, on the other hand, go to Cadiz, that would be an open flight which would compromise them in the eyes of the nation, and Admiral Rosily, who occupied this port with some of our ships, had orders to arrest them in the act of embarkation, and thus prevent the secession of the Spanish Colonies, which would be the inevitable result of the King's flight to America.

In proportion to the advance of this unexampled invasion, this taking possession by force of arms of a friendly country,

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, March 9.

[2] Napoleon to Murat, March 23.

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where the invaders presented themselves with professions of peace and fraternity, the public discontent, at first suppressed by uncertainty, surprise, and ignorance of passing events, gradually burst forth with a violence corresponding to the long torpor which had preceded it. The Spanish people, always intolerant of strangers, were indignant at the sight of unknown legions occupying their territory under pretext of making it respected. Still, as yet unsuspicious of the true object of these movements, they received our soldiers not only without distrust, but even sometimes with a welcome that bordered on enthusiasm. Their hatred and anger were directed against the favourite, who, according to popular opinion, had brought the French into Spain for the purpose of using them as instruments of his personal ambition. Some colour, too, was given to these conjectures by the fact, that at the beginning of the invasion, in order to avert reproaches which might fairly have been showered upon him, and to quiet the public mind, Godoy, at all times shortsighted, had spread a rumour that the entrance of our troops was the result of a plan concerted between the Emperor and the King. These excuses of a man who had exhausted all plausible explanations, had been believed seriously. Now, therefore, the public turned them against him, made him responsible for every new and startling event that occurred, and gave him credit for the most sinister intrigues against his master, against the heir to the throne, and against the nation itself. At the same time, with an inconsistency common to the multitude, they took pleasure in seeing signs unfavourable to his interest, in the well-known proofs of sympathy which Beauharnais lavished on the Prince of the Asturias. They loudly predicted that this intervention, brought about by the favourite, would end in his discomfiture and in the elevation of his victim. They already saw Napoleon extending his protecting hand over the head of Ferdinand, placing thereon the crown of Spain, restored to its ancient splendour by a closer alliance with the powerful Emperor.

It was at this moment that vague but persistent rumours of the approaching departure of the royal family began to be circulated throughout Madrid. They were then at Aranjuez, a few leagues

distant, and were, in fact, preparing to start for Andalusia. The advances of the French, Napoleon's behaviour, at one moment doubtful, at the next threatening, and Murat's obstinate refusal to give any explanation, had at length opened Godoy's eyes. He now understood all.

Thanks to the assistance of the Queen, he had succeeded in persuading the King to go to Seville, which, by its position, protected by a river and a mountain-chain, was safe from any sudden attack. There, too, they would find themselves within reach of the sea. They summoned troops to Aranjuez; sent orders to the army corps in Portugal to fall back on Andalusia; and finally began, with the utmost secrecy, to prepare for the journey. But the Royal family had in its midst a vigilant informer in the person of the Prince of the Asturias, who, deceived by Beauharnais, and believing the French to be deliverers armed for his cause, looked on this departure as the ruin of his hopes. The project, divulged by him and by the Ministers to whom it was thought necessary to communicate it at the last moment, was soon known at Madrid, and there created an extraordinary sensation. The people saw in it the Lisbon scenes repeated, all the underhand intrigues with which popular imagination credited the favourite. In presence of the increasing excitement the King tried to deny the report by a proclamation, but he failed in restoring confidence. An incredulous and irritated mob, composed of men of every class, poured from Madrid and its neighbourhood into Aranjuez, to take upon itself the surveillance of the royal residence; and, should need be, to hinder the court from carrying out its designs. The spirit of distrust and of revolt spread even amongst the very soldiers, who took their full share in the guard established over the King and the favourite.

In such a state of things the slightest incident suffices to set all in a blaze. On the evening of the 17th of March, a lady, carefully veiled and escorted by the guard of honour, was seen to leave the palace of the Prince of Peace. A patrol, who was on the alert, interfered, and insisted on seeing the lady's face, when, in the altercation which ensued, a shot was fired by some

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unknown hand. At once, as if in answer to a signal, a furious mob ran to the spot. They besieged Godoy's palace, broke open the doors, fell upon the guards, and rushed into the interior with cries of vengeance and of death. Meantime, the object of their hatred had disappeared, but they stopped respectfully before the Princess of Peace, whom they saluted as another of Godoy's victims. Then, turning to the furniture, paintings, and works of art, they broke and destroyed everything in the place, but retired without attacking the court, though they instituted a stricter surveillance than ever over it.

Overwhelmed with anxiety, the King, in dismay, thought only of saving him whom he called his friend. In the vain effort to appease the people, he withdrew from Godoy all his honours and official appointments. He even dismissed his brother Diego, who commanded the guards. The 18th of March passed over without any excitement. Godoy was supposed to be in safety, and it was hoped that the worst was over, when, towards ten o'clock on the morning of the 19th, a fearful tumult arose round the palace of the favourite. A report spread that he had been discovered and arrested, and the mob demanded impetuously that he should be delivered up to their fury. Pale and covered with blood, Godoy shortly afterwards did appear, and it was with difficulty that the Garde-du-Corps warded off the blows aimed at him from all sides. They succeeded, however, in conducting him to their quarters, fenced round by their horses, while the mob pursued him with their curses. The man whom a freak of fortune had first raised to such a pinnacle of greatness, and now cast bruised and bleeding on the floor of a dungeon, had been close at hand during the last thirty-six hours, at no distance from those scenes which so widely differed from his previous experience. Not one cry of this multitude, thirsting for his blood, had been lost upon him. At the first sound, Godoy, aware of the conspiracy against him, had tried to escape by a secret door, but finding it guarded like all the other outlets, he fled to the top of his palace, and there, rolling himself up in some matting, concealed himself amongst the rafters of the roof. After remaining there for thirty-six

hours without moving, his sufferings became unendurable, and he left his hiding-place, when a soldier of the guard recognized, and immediately arrested, him. The barracks to which the guards had transferred him not being considered safe, the King was still uneasy on his account; wishing, moreover, to calm the public mind, and to encourage the prisoner, he sent to him his son Ferdinand, now become the idol of the people. The Prince, with ill-concealed joy and an air of triumph, proceeded to the fallen favourite and promised him that his life should be spared. It is said that Godoy then showed, amidst all his misfortunes, a flash of pride, sufficient to prove that he was not void of courage. 'Are you already King, that you grant favours?' he asked his mortal enemy. 'No; but I soon shall be!' replied Ferdinand.

Well might he think it, considering the rapid march of events, and that same day a new turn of fortune seemed to justify his prediction. A carriage and six, destined for the favourite, who the King desired at all hazards to remove from Aranjuez, having stopped at the door of the guards' barracks, was the signal for a renewal of greater disturbances than ever. The mob seized the horses, cut the traces, broke the carriage, and drove away the coachmen. At this news the King, wearied by this long struggle and frightened at the unpopularity which menaced even the throne, recalling, too, to his mind the most tragical scenes of the French Revolution, manifested the intention of abdicating in favour of his son. The Queen, pre-occupied solely by Godoy's danger, instantly accepted this last means of escape, from which no one present tried to dissuade her. The act of abdication was drawn up on the spot, and at about seven o'clock in the evening it was published in Aranjuez. The people received it with a loud cry of joy, which was re-echoed in Madrid that same evening. On the following day Ferdinand the Seventh was proclaimed King amidst excitement almost amounting to delirium, but which was composed as much of hatred against the overthrown favourite as of enthusiasm for the new sovereign. The mob rushed into and sacked the houses of Godoy's relations and friends, trod his busts under foot, and triumphantly carried about the likenesses of the young Prince, to

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whom they now attributed every virtue. Popular imagination generally throws down one idol, only to raise up another. It never stops to discriminate, and it adores or execrates in turn that individual, who, for the moment, is in its eyes either a monster or a demigod.

While the people, stunned by their own clamour, thought only of applauding the preparations for this ephemeral reign, Murat was quietly descending the slopes of the Guadarrama. He was but one day's march from Madrid. The revolution which had occurred at Aranjuez had completely altered the state of affairs. On the one hand, the project of flight upon which he had calculated had not been carried out; on the other, he now found himself confronted by a young and popular King, instead of by one who was worn-out and tottering. This position, so improbable in such a country had not been foreseen by Napoleon. He had almost come to consider the flight of the Court as an 'accomplished fact.' He was kept so well informed of everything by his agents that he expected it to take place at the exact moment fixed on by the Court; but he awaited, with even greater curiosity, the effect it would produce at Madrid. In the same letter to Murat in which he foretold the departure of the King for Seville, he said: 'I suppose that I shall receive an account of *what happens at Madrid on the 17th and 18th of March.*'[1] The expected crisis certainly did commence during those two days, but it ended very differently from what he had hoped.

Though Murat had no special instructions for such an unforeseen complication of affairs, he had general instructions which clearly indicated the line he ought to adopt, and his ambition, raised of late to the highest pitch by the false hopes he had been allowed to entertain, pointed it out to him even more distinctly. 'Do your utmost to calm and reassure everyone,' said Napoleon in all his letters to him. 'Keep an even balance between all parties. I wish to continue friendly to Spain, but still to be in a position to overcome resistance by force. Tell the Spaniards that I am coming, that I desire to serve their country, and send

[1] Napoleon to Murat, March 23.

the Princes to meet me at Burgos and Bayonne, if you find it possible.'[1] Whether the court were to take flight or not, all this advice betrayed the secret desire of appearing to the Spanish nation as a sovereign arbiter between the two parties then dividing it. The balance having now been violently upset in favour of one of these two parties, Murat acted thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of his instructions by endeavouring to restore it in favour of the other, without otherwise in any way prejudging the real issue of the dispute. But he went to work with a crafty cunning and a machiavellism which ambition alone could have inspired in a mind like his, not usually remarkable for its power of calculation.

He was at the gates of Madrid when he received a message from the Queen of Etruria, whom he had known in Italy, and who had taken refuge with her parents when Napoleon had driven her out of her kingdom. In this message, she besought his pity for the dethroned Sovereigns and for the Prince of Peace. The Queen, after recalling to Murat the friendship which bound them to Godoy, earnestly implored for him his powerful protection and begged him to come and visit the King at Aranjuez. Murat did not go, but he sent his aide-de-camp, Monthion. That officer saw the dethroned Sovereigns, and, in addition to their grief, alarm, and anxiety about Godoy, he also witnessed their implacable animosity against their son, whom they accused of being the cause of all their woes. Monthion brought a letter back to Murat from the Queen of Spain, full of the most humble petitions, and in which she said that he, with the Emperor, was their only hope of rescue. She appealed to his friendship and to his feelings of humanity. The Prince of Peace had been thus cruelly persecuted solely on account of his attachment to France and to the Emperor. All she asked was to go and finish her days peaceably in a country that would suit the King's health and her own, with the King and with their only friend, who was likewise the friend of Murat. (March 22.)

It is singular that in the letters that were published much later by Napoleon in the *Moniteur* under the name of the Queen of

[1] Napoleon's Letters to Murat, from the 8th to the 16th of March, 1808.

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Spain, but which it is well-known were falsified, a number of passages should have been allowed to remain expressing, with the same simplicity, this desire of living in retirement,—passages little in accord with the regret arising from disappointed ambition attributed to her. 'Let the Grand Duke induce the Emperor,' she said in another of these letters, 'to have a sufficient allowance made to the King my husband, to me, and to the Prince of Peace, that will enable us all three to live together in some place suitable to our health, but free from command or intrigue.'[1] These certainly were not the sentiments of a Queen aspiring to re-ascend her throne. But it suited Murat's policy as well as that of Napoleon, that she should seem to feel a regret to which she was a stranger. Moreover, it was not difficult to induce her to feign it, by offering her an opportunity of revenge.

Murat, on receiving this information from his aide-de-camp, at once perceived the possibility of turning to account the great power which his character of protector conferred upon him, and he resolved to persuade the King to protest against his abdication. Although his renunciation of the throne had not been extracted from him by violence, it had at least been dictated by fear, and had been unaccompanied by any of the formalities usual on such occasions. Monthion, consequently, was sent back to Aranjuez on the 23rd of March, and returned thence bearing with him a document antedated the 21st, in which the King declared that he had abdicated only 'in order to avoid greater misfortunes, and to obviate the necessity of shedding the blood of his subjects, which rendered the said act null and void.' Armed with this document, which he intended to keep secret until Napoleon had decided whether he would make use of it or not, yet determined, on the other hand, not to recognise Ferdinand until he received orders to do so, Murat, it may be seen, committed no one, but left matters as they were, adroitly reserving complete liberty of action to the Emperor. He had, in fact, merely adopted a measure which strengthened the position

[1] These letters of the Queen of Spain were published in the *Moniteur* of February 5, 1810.

prescribed to him, although he had immeasurably improved it in respect to the projected arbitration; for, in consequence of this protest, instead of there now being one King in Spain there were only two pretenders to the Crown, each relying on a disputed title.

The violent passions then agitating Spain allowed little room for thought or reflection. Nor is it surprising that Murat's entry into Madrid, which took place on the 23rd of March, was generally regarded as a support to the new reign. He had published a proclamation in which he held up to public indignation all those who tried to excite an *unjust and absurd distrust* of the French army. Every one knew, that, for a long time past, Beauharnais had been the adviser and decided partisan of the Prince of the Asturias. The Emperor, therefore, must be favourable to the Prince. Was he not longing to see him married to one of his nieces? The French troops, consequently, could only help to consolidate his throne. The public did not look deeper, and our soldiers, received with open arms by the inhabitants of Madrid, were present next day at Ferdinand's entry into his capital. This reception gave rise to such an outburst of joy and affection, that it is difficult to comprehend how Murat, despite his giddiness, should have failed to observe, as others present did, the wild energy which characterised these demonstrations of the people.

In those times it took at least six or seven days to send communications from Madrid to Paris. Napoleon, therefore, did not receive, until the 27th of March, Murat's letter reporting the events which had taken place between the 18th and 20th, namely, the revolution at Aranjuez, Godoy's fall, and the King's abdication. Nor did he know of the protest until the 30th, for Murat had not got it himself until the 23rd, and most probably forwarded it to the Emperor on the 24th. But, before he had cognizance of this act, which was of such importance to him, Napoleon, on receipt of the first news, traced out a line of conduct for Murat which, by anticipation, approved of all that he had done. 'I have received your letter of the 20th of March,' he wrote to him on the 27th. 'You must prevent any injury

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befalling the King, Queen, or Prince of Peace. *You must act as if the old King were still reigning, until the new King be recognised by me,* and on this point you must wait for my orders.' It would be impossible to define more precisely the general bearing of the policy which Murat had been following, guided by his own ambition as much as by his previous instructions. As to the intention which inspired Napoleon to assume this attitude of lofty impartiality between the two Kings, it is revealed with the utmost clearness in the following letter, written by him on the same day, the 27th of March, to his brother Louis, King of Holland:

'. . . . I have decided on placing a French prince upon the Spanish throne. The climate of Holland does not suit you. Moreover, Holland can never rise from its ruins. . . . Answer me categorically. If I make you King of Spain, will you accept it? Can I reckon upon you? . . . . Confide this to no one, and speak on the subject of this letter to no person whatever; for a thing must be done, before one admits having ever thought of it.'

Napoleon's determination to dethrone the Spanish Bourbons, in order to substitute a Prince of his own dynasty—a determination previously indicated by numberless unmistakeable signs—is thus materially confirmed on the 27th of March, by a document of undeniable authenticity. At that moment Napoleon knew nothing of the protest made by Charles the Fourth, for it did not reach him with Murat's despatch until the 30th of March, and the only sentiment it evoked was a more complete and explicit approval of the Grand Duke of Berg's conduct: 'I have received your letters, *with those of the King of Spain,*' he writes to him. 'You have done well in not recognising the Prince of the Asturias. You must re-establish Charles the Fourth at the Escurial; treat him with the greatest respect, and declare that he governs in Spain, until I have recognised the revolution. *I suppose that the Prince of Peace will pass through Bayonne.*' These last words, combined with the instructions which desired Murat to send the Princes to Burgos, and a passage in a letter to Bessières of the same date, prove that Napoleon, without precisely ordering his lieutenant to send Godoy to him by main

force, as well as the King and Queen, yet omitted no opportunity of suggesting that he should take upon himself the responsibility of this bold step. By allowing him to see that he expected it, he gave him to understand that it was a matter of course: 'Protect the Prince of Peace,' he wrote to Bessières. 'He is sent to France on purpose to be safe. And receive King Charles the Fourth and the Queen with the utmost respect, should the Grand Duke of Berg *bend their steps* in your direction.'

On the 27th of March, therefore, Napoleon had not only ordered and approved of all that Murat had hitherto done in Spain, but he had even gone much further, for he had already suggested what could not occur until later, and had disposed of the crown by offering it to his brother Louis. It is important to bear all these circumstances in mind if one wishes to judge impartially of a forgery which ranks amongst the most audacious on record in the mournful catalogue of historical deceptions, and which, at the same time, has been the most universally accepted. The document I allude to is a well-known letter of Napoleon's to Murat, dated the 30th March, 1808. This letter was published for the first time by Las Cases, in the *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, and it was reproduced by Montholon, who affirms, as does Las Cases himself, that it was communicated to him personally by Napoleon. It breathes so strongly the style and ideas of the Emperor, that it has deceived all historians, even those who could not avoid noticing how much it differs from all that Napoleon had written before and after this letter. The editors of his *Correspondance*, who were last in the field, and possessed the most trustworthy sources of investigation, although admitting the impossibility of finding either the original or the draft, or even an authentic copy of this document, do not hesitate, nevertheless, to place it under its date amongst the Emperor's letters, without caring for the interests of historical truth or the errors to which they expose the good faith of their readers.

This letter, written with the evident intention of casting all the responsibility of the events in Spain on Murat, is nothing

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but a long remonstrance in which Napoleon predicts to his brother-in-law, with a foresight which an historian does not hesitate to characterise as *supernatural*, all the difficulties that are certain to spring up around him. He bitterly complains of being dragged on and implicated by Murat's giddy haste: he fears that Murat is deceived and deceives himself as to the state of Spain. Murat ought not to imagine that he is attacking an unarmed nation; *the Spaniards are a young, energetic people*, who have all the courage and enthusiasm of men unexhausted by political passions. The aristocracy and the clergy are the masters of Spain. *They will raise levies en masse, which will perpetuate the war.* Spain has 100,000 men under arms; *distributed in different places, they will serve as a nucleus in each for a complete uprising of the monarchy.* . . . . He can do much good to Spain; but what are the best means to adopt? Shall he go to Madrid? Shall he take upon himself the part of a great Protector by intervening between the father and the son? . . . . Nothing must be hastened. It is necessary to be guided by events . . . . He disapproves of his having entered Madrid so precipitately; he ought to have halted ten leagues off. Murat must be careful not to bind him to an interview with Ferdinand, *unless he considers the state of affairs to be such as would justify Napoleon in recognising him as King of Spain.* He must so act that the Spaniards may have no suspicion of the part Napoleon may take; but that will not be difficult, as *he knows nothing of it himself.* Here follow the plans which the Emperor meditates for the *regeneration* of Spain and the improvement of her institutions. He then adds fresh advice as to the consideration with which Murat must treat all the inhabitants, particularly the nobles and the clergy, and specifies the promises which he ought to make to them. The letter ends by some military instructions which we shall examine with the others.

The most striking point at first sight in this long and verbose communication, is, the extreme difference of tone and language which distinguishes it from all the letters addressed by Napoleon to Murat before and after the 29th of March. The same hand

and the same mind are doubtless recognisable in it, but compared with the others it is full of discord. It has neither their conciseness, their practical sobriety of thought, nor their swift, direct style, while everything in it betrays literary composition. Each subject is touched upon in solemn, pompous, generalizing terms, recalling the long-winded confidential speeches of a tragedy. In the same degree that Napoleon is brief, precise, sharp and imperious in his correspondence with Murat, is he here vague, prolix, and diffuse. Instead of treating him roughly, according to his custom whenever he had reason to find fault, he expresses his disapprobation in terms full of magnanimous moderation. Instead of addressing him in the second person, as he does in all his letters of this period, *without any exception*, he calls him, '*Imperial Highness*'; a singularity the more remarkable, because, for several years after Murat became king, he refused him the title of *Majesty*. Instead of telling him clearly what he wishes or does not wish, he treats him to a complete political essay on the past and the future of Spain, and gives him advice which he never intended should be followed; in short, he lays before him in the coolest manner, a whole series of predictions, any one of which had it but crossed his mind, would have been sufficient to make him change his plans from beginning to end.

But this general discrepancy, though apparent to a practised eye, is of no account beside the contradiction in details which this document presents, when compared with the orders and instructions, so remarkable for their clearness, which Napoleon wrote at the same period, and to the same individual. That he should have concealed from Murat the offer he had just made to King Louis, and for this purpose assumed an indecision foreign to his character, need not surprise us. It is even possible to understand that he should speak to him of the Spanish people as young and energetic, and of the aristocracy and clergy as the two most powerful classes in Spain, although his whole conduct proved that he did not believe either in this energy nor in this power, and although he reproached him at the same time with 'attaching too much importance to

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the opinion of the town of Madrid, and to the vagaries of the mob.'[1] The acts of a man, it must be remembered, are not invariably in harmony with his thoughts. But how is it possible to explain the inconceivable manner in which he here contradicts himself except by the supposition that he was momentarily suffering from mental alienation. In this pretended letter of March 29th he writes: '*I do not approve of the line your Highness has adopted in taking possession of Madrid with such precipitation. The army should have been kept at ten leagues distant from Madrid.*' Yet Napoleon sent Murat on the 9th of March the order to take Madrid, and from that day forward had constantly renewed it.

Nor is this all, for, on the 9th of March, he desires him to enter the town, and, should it be necessary, *even to take it by main force*, so little was he possessed by those fears attributed to him in this apocryphal letter; if *war be kindled all will be lost.* He preferred pacific means, but he never shrank from employing force. 'In case the Spaniards are able to defend Madrid,' he writes to him, 'General Dupont must advance by St. Ildefonso to join you, and you must *then march to Madrid and attack it together*, should that be necessary.'

On the 14th of March he sends him the most precise military instructions, so as to leave no contingency unprovided for, and adds: 'The most useful plan will be to reach Madrid without hostilities, to encamp the troops there by divisions, in order to make them appear more numerous, &c.;' and on the 10th of March, he again repeats: 'the essential point is to reach Madrid, there to rest the troops, and to replenish the commissariat.' On the 19th of March he is still more urgent: '*I suppose you will receive this letter at Madrid, which I ardently desire to hear that my troops have entered peacefully.*'

This march of Murat's to Madrid had been so completely planned and arranged by Napoleon himself, that he knew long beforehand the number of halting places, and the precise day on which the entry would take place. On the 9th of March he had already desired Champagny to inform Beauharnais, 'that

[1] Napoleon to Murat. April 9.

on the 22nd or 23rd of March, a French army of 50,000 men would enter Madrid;' and on the 23rd of March, the day on which the troops were to appear at the gates of Madrid, he writes to Murat, '*I suppose that you arrived at Madrid to-day, or that you will arrive there to-morrow.*'

Henceforward, he always speaks to him of this entry into the Spanish capital as an 'accomplished fact.' Nay, more; fearing that Murat might not have troops enough to suppress an insurrection, he orders Bessières also to advance by forced marches towards Madrid, with the Imperial Guard (March 26th) and we are asked to believe that this same man, writing on the 29th of March to Murat, whom he knew to be in possession of such positive and stringent orders, should yet speak to him of the entry to Madrid as an act which had taken place against his wish! An aberration of intellect which it is ventured, moreover, to attribute to a calculating mind like that of Napoleon!

The reproaches which he is supposed to have addressed to Murat on other points are equally inexplicable. 'The march you have prescribed for General Dupont, is *too rapid*,' he again writes. Yet it was he who had minutely planned this same march in his instructions of the 14th of March, and of the following days, in which he authorized him to bring the greater portion of Dupont's corps to Madrid; and his instructions in this respect are so decided, that, on the 27th of March, he recurs to them in the most formal terms: 'I can only repeat,—what *I have already written to you*,—to unite the corps of Moncey and of *Dupont at Madrid*.' As to the attitude he is to hold towards the auxiliaries of Solano, the contradiction between the fictitious orders and the true instructions, without being so flagrant, is none the less real: 'Let Solano pass by Badajoz,' says the supposed document . . . . 'always keep at a distance from the Spanish corps; if *war were kindled all would be lost*.' These last words sufficiently indicate the spirit which dictated this posthumous advice; a desire to take credit after the event, for a foresight which had never existed. Junot long before had received the order at all hazards to prevent Solano

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marching either to Cadiz or Madrid; while General Merle, in like manner, had been desired to detain at Burgos the Spanish corps that occupied Gallicia; and Murat's first duty was to support both one and the other. Equally impossible is it to reconcile the supposed letter with all those that preceded and followed it, in regard to the projected interview between Napoleon and Ferdinand. Finally, a conclusive argument for the rejection of the authenticity of this document is deducible from the letter addressed by Napoleon to Murat on the 9th of April, in which he says to him: 'I see by your letter of the 3rd of April that you have received *my letter* of the 27th of March. *The one of the 30th*, and also Savary, who must have reached you, will have made my intentions still better known to you.' Of the letter of the 29th, so important, so long, so explicit, not a word is mentioned. Taking for granted that he could have thus so palpably contradicted himself, is it possible to admit that he would not make the slightest allusion to a despatch which ought to have upset all Murat's plans? Is it possible to admit that he would not only pass it by in absolute silence, but continue to give his lieutenant instructions wholly at variance with those contained in this despatch?

That these striking discrepancies should have escaped the observation of historians who had no means of studying Napoleon's *Correspondance*, or that they should detect in the too celebrated letter of the 29th of March, a magnificent stroke of genius neutralised by Murat's imprudence and ambition, is an error easy to comprehend: but, that it should be given to us as authentic after having seen all the documents in dispute, cannot be permitted so long as good sense and discrimination have any right to prevail over credulity and infatuation. A passionate admirer of Napoleon's memory, our predecessor in this history, struck, like us, by the insoluble contradictions which this letter of the 29th of March presented to all those that preceded and followed it, discusses a certain number with visible perplexity, in a dissertation eminently remarkable for its ingenuity.[1]

[1] Thiers, *Hist. du Consulat et de l'Empire*, vol. viii. Appendix.

He here allows us to study the remarkable struggle between criticism and idolatry which is taking place in his mind. At one moment, after an argument full of eloquence, he is apparently approaching a definitive conclusion, when he stops short, not finding it possible to believe that Murat ever received such an extraordinary missive, nor willing to admit that Napoleon could have lied in stating that he had written it; he tries to extricate himself from the dilemma by the ingenious device of supposing that the despatch had indeed been written, but never had been sent. In his eyes it is merely an 'inconsistency, full of genius,' conceived in one of those moments when Napoleon 'appears to have been struck by a supernatural light.' An explanation, forsooth, which explains nothing, for the improbable and impossible circumstances concerning this letter do not consist in its having been sent, but in the fact that it could have been written: that a man in the enjoyment of his faculties could, not only have contradicted himself in such serious matters, above all when addressing his most intimate confidants, but that he should have denied the clear, positive, repeated orders which he had dictated, or written with his own hand, during twenty consecutive days. This is the mystery! This the enigma! Admitting even that he was inconsistent and repented of his inconsistency, the theory is untenable, for, in such a case, this apocryphal document ought at least to bear the same stamp as those thousand counter-orders to be met with in Napoleon's correspondence; while, on the contrary, it does not contain one of those changes of tactics so habitual in him. It presupposes anterior instructions in the same sense, forms part of a continuous system, implies forethought for a whole series of political contingencies, of which there is no trace in the other documents; in a word, it has neither meaning, aim, nor motive, unless it can be regarded as a forgery composed for the purpose of deceiving history. The forger neither can be, nor has been, any other than Napoleon himself. 'But,' exclaims the author whom I have mentioned above, 'He had too much pride to act thus!' What strange blindness, after all the falsifications which this same

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author has himself been forced to record! Had Napoleon too much pride, when day by day, during fourteen years of his reign, he falsified the diplomatic documents in the *Moniteur*, the news from abroad, the debates in the Chambers, and even the reports of his administration? Had he too much pride when later, at St. Helena, he composed those six large volumes of Memoirs of which each line is a falsehood? Had he too much pride when, visited by those whom he knew were eager to treasure up every word he uttered, he made use of them as sworn propagators of his false testimonies? Is it probable that so grand, so honest, so truthful a soul could debase himself so much as to invent one additional fiction? That Napoleon lied audaciously to his contemporaries every day and every hour of his reign, admits of no denial; but who, except a systematic detractor of his glory, could suppose it possible, that he would ever have thought of lying to posterity?

I do not condescend to apologise to those who may consider that I have needlessly digressed, in entering on this close examination of one of the most remarkable historical forgeries that has obtained credence since that of the False Decretals. As so many volumes have been written about one battle, I may be allowed, on my part, to devote a few pages to this victory, albeit somewhat less glorious, gained in the cause of truth and justice. Of the many disgraceful acts imputed to Napoleon, I have proved some to be undeniable, others I have classed as doubtful, and from others I have had no hesitation in completely clearing his memory. Here again I shall give utterance to my thoughts, without caring whether or not they may shock those minds which have for so long a period been nurtured on agreeable fictions; for, it is their duty to learn how to accept the truth, not that of truth to accommodate itself to their feeble spirits. I have already declared that the letter of the 29th of March is a forgery; I now boldly assert that the forger is no other than Napoleon. If this sentence be confirmed, as there is every reason to believe it will be by the final judgment of the future, it will further be seen that there was even something in this obscure affair of Spain worse than

the snares to which it gave rise—namely, that low cunning *à la Scapin* by means of which Napoleon has partially succeeded, for half a century, in throwing the responsibility of the initiative and of the final event on that poor feather-pated Murat, who, in this instance, was only his instrument and his dupe.

So little was Napoleon actuated by this policy of temporising and delay, for which he liked to give himself credit later, that, in his opinion, on the contrary, the moment for action had arrived. Two circumstances point this out clearly; first, his departure for Bourdeaux, which he reached on the fourth of April; secondly, that of Savary for Madrid—of Savary, his confidant, and the man on whom he most relied for carrying out his designs. The instructions given by Napoleon to Savary having been, according to all probability, merely verbal, it is difficult to know their full tenor. But Savary's acts sufficiently indicate what they may have been. His mission was to induce Ferdinand to visit Bayonne. The account he gives of it in his *Mémoires* is nothing but an essay, transparently modelled on the apocryphal document which I have been discussing. His description, written in the most solemn language, is simply an amplification of the original which he attributes to Napoleon, and the improbability of which is ludicrous. Everything he afterwards states concerning the part he played, is a mere tissue of clumsy falsehoods, related with the placidity and open-heartedness of a most simple-minded spirit. To give an idea of the sincerity of this good apostle, it is sufficient to say that Savary does not hesitate to impute Ferdinand's journey to Bayonne to Murat's influence alone. If he, Savary, did accompany the young King in this fatal journey, it was only in order 'to take advantage of his post horses.' This accident alone made 'his carriages be found in company with those of the king.' In one word, he had as little to do with the affair as with that of the Duc d'Enghien. He, moreover, declared on his authority as eye-witness, that Napoleon never thought of dethroning the Bourbons until he had himself seen Ferdinand's incapacity at Bayonne, and until in some measure forced to it by the insurrection which broke out at Madrid when the King entered France.

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It were puerile to undertake any serious refutation of such assertions. Napoleon's *Correspondance* offers the clearest proofs that, both before and after Savary's mission, and especially in everything relating to the journey of the two kings to Bayonne, Murat only carried out the wishes which Napoleon had frequently expressed to him. On the 5th of April he writes to him: 'I told you to make the old King come to the Escurial and *yet to make yourself his complete master;* to make the Prince of Peace come to Bayonne. . . . . As to the new King, you tell me that he is coming to Bayonne. *I think that cannot fail to be useful.*' From the moment of Savary's mission, Murat retired into the second rank, and left the management of the undertaking to Savary. He submitted with docility to the directions of a man familiar with the most secret wishes of his master. On the 9th of April, 1808, Napoleon wrote to him: 'It is desirable that the Prince of the Asturias should be at Madrid, or *that he should come to meet me.* In the latter case, I shall expect him at Bayonne. It would be vexatious if he took a *third course.*' (That is to say: It would be vexatious if he escaped.) 'Savary *knows all my plans* and must have informed you of my intentions. When one knows the end one ought to aim at, by aid of a little reflection the means easily present themselves.' On the following day, the 10th of April, when telling him of Reille's departure 'with instructions similar to those of Savary,' he adds: 'when the object I have in view and *of which Savary* will have informed you, is attained, you may verbally announce and mention everywhere in conversation, that my intention is, not only to preserve the integrity of the provinces and the independence of the country, but also the privileges of all classes, and that I desire to see Spain happy, &c. Those who wish for a *liberal government*, and the regeneration of Spain, will find it in my system. . . . . The grandees who desire the consideration and the honours that were denied them *in the past administration*, will find them restored, &c.' This is the language of a future sovereign. At length Murat's letters informed him of Savary's arrival at Madrid, and the terms in which he expressed his satisfaction at the news prove the perfect accord that existed between these

three men! 'I have heard with pleasure of Savary's arrival. *My instructions were thoroughly identical with what you wished to undertake.*' (April 12.)

Two days before Napoleon penned this letter, Ferdinand VII, seduced by the promises of which Savary was the bearer in the name of his sovereign, and in defiance of the advice of his own wisest counsellors, had started on his journey to meet the Emperor. He quitted Madrid on the 10th of April, leaving the administration of the kingdom to an upper Junta, which was entrusted with the government during his absence. Blindness of this description would be inexplicable, did we not know to what wild extremes a prolonged state of uncertainty can drive a mind in which fear, hope, and the love of rule, have been struggling for mastery. Ferdinand's position, besides, was such that, even when inclined to suspect, as he sometimes did, the intrigues with which he was in reality surrounded, it was at the same time most difficult to choose any course entirely free from inconvenience or even from danger. In view of the increasing concentration of French troops at Madrid, he could not have remained there any longer without placing himself under Murat's control; for Murat was already master of the town, and had the tone and manners of a conqueror. On the other hand, to fly in order to seek a safer residence would only be a repetition of that conduct which had been treated as a crime in Charles IV, and which had led to his downfall. Moreover such an act would cause an open rupture with the Emperor Napoleon. Should he foster unfriendly designs, this would afford him the only pretext he required for carrying them into effect; for neither Ferdinand nor his preceptor Escoiquiz,—a wit full of classical recollections,—could suppose for a moment that a great man and a hero who had reached such a pinnacle of glory and of power, could so degrade himself as to rob a crown by means worthy only of cut-throat ruffians. No! this treachery, this snare, did not, and never could, cross his mind. At most he contemplated some territorial cession on the left bank of the Ebro in exchange for Portugal, such as Izquierdo had spoken of when he returned recently from

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a visit to Paris. Napoleon's heart would infallibly be touched by this magnanimous mark of confidence;—for is not such a result to be found in numberless tragedies?

Murat's attitude certainly was far from reassuring. Not only did he refuse to recognise the new King, but, while urging him to accede to Napoleon's wishes, he often treated him with cool contempt, as though he disdained any longer to wear the mask of dissimulation he had assumed. But why not have recourse to that upright Beauharnais, who had never altered his language, and who had advised Ferdinand to throw himself into Napoleon's arms? Must not the ambassador be better informed than the general? Even if he could not be relied upon, was not honest Savary still near? and was it not significant that he lavished upon Ferdinand those titles of King and Majesty refused to him by Murat, who with his military frankness declared, 'that he came to Madrid to compliment the King in the name of the Emperor; that Napoleon only cared to ascertain whether Ferdinand's sentiments were as favourable to France as those of King Charles, in which case he would instantly recognise him; that the best means of coming to a speedy decision on this point was an interview between the two sovereigns; that such an interview could now be easily managed, as Napoleon was on his way to Madrid, and the fact of the prince going to meet him would predispose him altogether in his favour.'[1]

In this manner the fatal journey was decided upon, despite the remonstrances of some few devoted servants who saw through the snare. Although no news of Napoleon's entry into Spain had been received, and although his brother the Infant Don Carlos, had informed him positively that such entry had not taken place, Ferdinand believed that he would not have to go further than Burgos. He arrived in that town on the 12th of April. It was occupied by Bessières, who had orders from Savary, confirmed by Reille, to use force, if necessary, to make the young King continue his journey to Bayonne. Ferdinand

[1] Escoiquiz, *Des motifs qui ont engagé le roi Ferdinand à se rendre à Bayonne.* Cevallos, *Exposé des moyens employés pour usurper la couronne d'Espagne.*

showed signs of hesitation, but these were soon overcome by Savary's assurances. At Vittoria, however, he ascertained beyond doubt that Napoleon had not yet left Bourdeaux. This striking proof of the artifices and deception which had been set on foot to entice him out of his kingdom suddenly enlightened him. Sending for Savary he told him he had been deceived, but that he was determined not to go further. So far as Burgos the people had received him with enthusiasm and excitement, although the journey was everywhere disapproved of. According, however, as he approached nearer to the frontier, only one voice was heard in condemnation of this silly resolution.

The common sense of the people quickly penetrated the meaning of those squadrons of cavalry which joined the royal cortège from every quarter, and closed it in on all sides, on pretext of serving as a royal escort. They understood the mystery of this skilful arrangement, and pressing round the King's carriage entreated him not to go further. At Vittoria the popular excitement became so alarming that Savary, although provided with every means necessary to overcome resistance on the part of the King, and irritated beyond measure at his refusal to proceed, thought it wiser, nevertheless, to avoid collision, and to go himself to Napoleon, either to obtain new instructions, or some fresh expedient wherewith to deceive his victim.

Surrounded as he was by Verdier's division and by Bessières' cavalry, Ferdinand felt the necessity of behaving cautiously towards Napoleon. But he wished at least to be reassured by some explanation from him. He wrote to him, therefore, on the day of his arrival at Vittoria, reminding him of all the proofs of docility and attachment he had given him since his elevation to the throne. He recalled to his mind the counter-order sent to the Spanish troops who were returning from Portugal, the sums lavishly expended on the French troops, notwithstanding the wretched state of the finances, their admission into the capital to the exclusion of the national army, and finally his own journey with that of the Infant Don Carlos. Silence, and a steady refusal to recognise Ferdinand, had been the only answer vouchsafed by Napoleon. Now that he had come so far as

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Vittoria, at the repeated request of Savary, who had assured him that Napoleon only 'desired to know if the new reign would bring about any change in the policy of the two states,' he implored his Majesty to put an end to the painful position to which his silence had reduced him.

Savary reached Bayonne almost simultaneously with his master, and brought back Napoleon's answer to Ferdinand: 'Brother, I have received your Royal Highness's letters,' wrote the Emperor to him. 'In the papers which you received from the King, your father, you must have seen proofs *of the interest which I have always felt for you.* You will permit me to speak to you on the present occasion with *frankness* and *sincerity.* I hoped, on my arrival at Madrid, to induce my illustrious friend to adopt some reforms necessary for his states. . . . The affairs in the North have delayed my journey; meantime the events in Aranjuez have taken place. I am no judge of what has occurred, but what I do know is, that it is dangerous to accustom the people to shed blood, and to take justice into their own hands.' After this parade of good-will and of edifying maxims, Napoleon interceded for the Prince of Peace, whose trial could not take place without dishonour to the Queen. Further, he said: 'Your Royal Highness has no other rights to the crown of Spain but those transmitted to you by *your mother,*' words as insulting to Ferdinand as to his old parents. He then explained his wish to *talk* to Ferdinand, by the necessity of knowing whether the abdication of Charles had been voluntary or forced. 'I say it to your Royal Highness, to the Spaniards, and to the whole world, that if the abdication of King Charles was purely voluntary, if he was not driven to it by the insurrection of Aranjuez, I shall make no difficulty in accepting it, and *I shall acknowledge your Royal Highness as King of Spain.*'

After this oratorical flourish of precaution, which was perfidious on the part of the man who held in his pocket the protest dictated by his agents to King Charles, he comes to the affair of the marriage. He blames the Prince for having made the proposal without his father's knowledge—'for,' said he, speaking with regret of this step, which he had himself made

Beauharnais suggest to the young Prince, 'every proceeding with a foreign sovereign on the part of a hereditary prince *is criminal.*' He expressed his willingness, however, to forget this crime, and again fostered the delusion in the unfortunate young man's mind by the following words, which he carefully suppressed when he saw fit to publish this document in the *Moniteur*: 'I consider the marriage of a French princess with your Royal Highness *conducive to the interests of my people*, and regard it especially as a circumstance that will attach me by new ties *to a house with which I have had every reason to be pleased since I came to the throne.*'

Napoleon's letter was dated the 16th of April. On the next day, the 17th, he wrote as follows to Bessières: 'You will find herein copy of a letter which Savary takes to the Prince of the Asturias. If the Prince of the Asturias comes to Bayonne, all right. *If he return to Burgos, you must have him arrested and brought to Bayonne.*'[1]

Ferdinand was still at Vittoria, watched like a prisoner by our troops, under the eyes of a people who were trembling with uneasiness, and ready at all hazards to save their King. Even here warnings did not fail him. A former old minister, Don Marianos Luis Urquijo, who came forth from retirement to pay his respects to Ferdinand, shared the general alarm and the distress of the King's advisers. He conjured them in a touching address, full of the wisest and most prophetic forethought, to give up their foolish resolve. He reproached them with lowering the dignity of the monarchy by leading the King like a vassal, nay, almost as a suppliant, to a foreign sovereign without invitation, without preparation, or any of the customary formalities. He pointed out the snare laid for them, and unveiled the progress and ultimate enslavement consequent on Napoleon's policy of artifice, the object he was pursuing, and now on the point of attaining by a final act of roguery. And when the Duke of l'Infantado exclaimed that he was calumniating a hero, he answered: 'You know nothing of heroes. Read Plutarch and you will see that the majority rose to greatness over

[1] Napoleon to Bessières. April 17, 1808.

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heaps of slain!' This eloquent appeal of Urquijo, embodied at once in a letter that cannot be read without admiration,[1] was supported by Joseph de Hervas and the Duc de Mahon, who proposed a plan of escape to Bilbao by Mondragone. But their efforts failed, from the blind confidence of Escoiquiz, of Cevallos, of the Dukes of San Carlos, and l'Infantado, who had attained complete control over the King's mind. Napoleon's letter, from the ambiguity of certain passages, no doubt gave them cause for reflection. But the commentaries by which Savary accompanied it allayed their fears, and his promises of immediate recognition, with repeated assurances of his master's friendly sentiments, having removed all unpleasant impressions, it was decided that the King should pursue his journey. As he was about to enter his carriage, the people rose and cut the traces; nor could their excitement be subdued, until Ferdinand showed himself to the populace, protested that he was going of his own accord, in the assurance of the Emperor Napoleon's friendship, and that he would shortly return.

Next day, the 20th of April, he and his suite crossed the small river which serves as a frontier between the two countries. The silence and solitude of the spot astonished him; for, it was here that stately interviews had taken place between the courts of Spain and France, and here that he expected to find Napoleon's messengers hastening to receive him. He thus continued his route to Bayonne without meeting any one but the three grandees of Spain, whom he had sent to compliment Napoleon. In return for this mark of courtesy they brought him back a most sinister announcement direct from Napoleon's lips, for the Emperor had undisguisedly informed them that henceforward the Bourbons could not reign in Spain. This information began to open his eyes, and filled him with anxiety; but it was no longer possible to retrace his steps. He was now in his enemy's hands, and there was no hope but in trusting to his good pleasure.

On reaching the gates of Bayonne, his mind a prey to the

[1] Letter to Don Gregorio della Cuesta, dated April 13. Llorente, *Mémoires pour servir*, &c.

most gloomy forebodings, he was received by Duroc and Berthier, who escorted him to a miserable-looking house selected for his residence. He had been there about an hour, when Napoleon came to visit him. The Emperor, who was living at the Chateau de Marac, a short distance from the town, had come on horseback to welcome his guest. He embraced him with the utmost cordiality, conversed with him for a few moments on indifferent topics, and taking leave, invited him to dinner on that same day. Towards evening the court carriages conveyed Ferdinand and his suite to the Chateau de Marac, where the Emperor received him with every demonstration of friendship. This affectionate reception speedily obliterated the sad impressions of the day. True, it was observed that Napoleon gave Ferdinand no other title than that of Prince of the Asturias; but as the recognition was to be preceded by a certain political understanding between the two sovereigns, no one took alarm. This feeling of security, however, was but of short duration. Almost immediately after dinner Napoleon dismissed his guests, retaining alone Canon Escoiquiz, to whom he had determined at once to communicate his intentions. Savary, on the other hand, who was to fulfil an analogous mission towards Ferdinand, was ordered to follow the Prince to Bayonne.

Napoleon had at one glance seen through the canon's character, and had noted his naïve vanity, his taste for intrigue, his pretension to be considered a statesman and to manage state affairs. He now determined to dazzle and win him over, certain through him to be able to exercise as decided an influence over Ferdinand's mind as he looked forward to obtaining over that of the old King by means of the Prince of Peace.

Left alone with Escoiquiz he assumed that familiar caressing tone which is always so seductive and unexpected in the mouth of a powerful and much-feared man. He treated him as a superior mind, as a statesman free from vulgar prejudice. First of all he communicated to him his intention of dethroning the Bourbons, and compensating Ferdinand by giving him the kingdom of Etruria. As to Spain, she would form

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an independent power; he did not wish to keep *even one village in it*. This overpowering revelation paralysed Escoiquiz with astonishment. Napoleon then recalling the scenes at Aranjuez, pointed out the impossibility of his recognising an abdication that had been dictated by violence, laying stress on the defect in form and the positive protest which invalidated this renunciation, and when the good canon struggled hard to persuade him that it had been free and voluntary, Napoleon, throwing aside all oratorical precaution, in order to go straight to the point, suddenly exclaimed: 'Leave that alone, Canon! and tell me if I can lose sight of the fact, that the interests of my empire and of my house require that the Bourbons should no longer reign in Spain? Even taking for granted that you are right in all you have said, I would answer you, Bad policy!' He then commenced explaining all the reasons which made the absolute possession of Spain indispensable to his system. Henceforward he could under no circumstance rely on a prince of the House of Bourbon, even admitting that this prince should marry a princess of the Bonaparte family, for that would afford no serious guarantee. He was not the man to whom they could offer such castles in the air (*châteaux en Espagne*). There was but one sensible and reasonable course, and that was the dethronement of the Bourbons. He had resolved upon it since Tilsit, and it had the approbation of the Emperor of Russia. The whole of Europe, and even Spain herself, would soon applaud it, for he was bringing a liberal constitution and thorough regeneration to the Spaniards. The *populace* would perhaps rise in some places, but he would have *religion and the monks* on his side, and the malcontents would soon be suppressed: 'Believe me,' he added, 'I have had experience of it. *Those countries where there are the greatest number of monks are easy to subdue.*'

With extraordinary volubility Napoleon displayed this pleasing picture to the eyes of one who, in spite of [illegible] was evidently flattered at being the chosen confidant of these grandiose plans. Meanwhile this singular personage enjoyed the effect which his powers of fascination were producing on his

auditor. He completely overpowered Escoiquiz with his coaxing ways, laughing, gesticulating, walking about, at one moment pinching the ear of the good canon, at another resuming the attitude of the master of the world.

Whilst Napoleon was taking such pains to act this curious comedy in presence of Escoiquiz, Savary was acquitting himself of his mission to Ferdinand with far less trouble. He coolly informed the Prince that the Emperor had resolved to substitute his own dynasty for that of the Bourbons, and that, in consequence, he must renounce the crown of Spain. It is unnecessary to say more about Savary than to observe, that he held himself erect when transmitting this message to the unfortunate young man, whom by dint of falsehoods he had drawn on step by step to the precipice. There are some men whose merit consists in knowing how to bear prosperity or misfortune. Of Savary it may be said that no one ever carried off treachery with more ease, coolness, and even pride, than this precious servant. It was easy to see that this was his element.[1]

On the next and following days, Napoleon returned to his conversations with Escoiquiz. He again offered him for Ferdinand, in exchange for the renunciation of the Spanish throne, that kingdom of Etruria with which he had twice before trafficked, and each time with unvarying effrontery had deceived those who had been simple enough to accept compensation from the hand of the spoliator. This time Ferdinand's advisers resisted with an obstinacy that did them honour. But nothing more clearly betrays the blindness cast over them by their delusions than their supposing it would be possible to bring the Emperor round to a compromise by a persistent refusal on their part, so firmly convinced were they that he intended only to frighten them by demanding much in order to obtain a little.

[1] Savary resolutely asserts in his Memoirs that he did not take this step with Ferdinand until much later, and many writers, on his assurance, have treated this as a dummy. But the date of his proceedings is established *to a certainty* by two letters of M. de Cevallos, both written on the 27th of April, 1808, one of which was published in the *Moniteur* (February 1810), and the other in the Memoirs of d'Azanza and O'Farrill.

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Napoleon, impatient at the delays of what he himself called his *Bayonne tragedy*, soon perceived that in order to conquer Ferdinand's resistance the presence of the King and Queen, but above all of the Prince of Peace who guided both, had become absolutely necessary. Conformably to his repeated orders, Murat had at length succeeded in withdrawing Godoy from the hands of the Governmental Junta, although they released him most reluctantly, fearful of jeopardizing the little popularity they still enjoyed. He at once sent him to Bayonne, which he reached on the 20th of April. The King and the Queen quickly followed, having first, however, at Napoleon's particular request[1], published the protest in which Charles IV retracted his abdication as having been forced upon him.

The old sovereigns arrived at Bayonne in a high state of irritation against their son, to whom they attributed all their misfortunes, and with a new-born aversion to that crown which could now be nothing else than a burden, since it had subjected them to such contempt and hatred on the part of their subjects. They were also rejoiced again to meet their friend, Godoy, whom they had given up all hope of ever seeing. The latter, owing his life to Napoleon's intervention, and feeling moreover excessive fear of him, was inclined to do whatever he might please. Nothing could be more favourable to the realization of Napoleon's projects, for it was easy to make use of the father to obtain the son's renunciation, and easier still to induce Charles IV to give up a crown no longer of any value in his eyes. The consent of the Prince of Peace was, therefore, the first point to be secured, and his connivance would not be difficult to gain in the state of depression into which he had fallen.

Napoleon acquainted him with his intention of punishing Ferdinand by forcing him to make an *amende honorable* to his parents—a certain means of flattering hearts in which one single passion, that of vengeance, still lingered. He then enumerated the rich compensations which would console them for the loss of a precarious sovereignty that would be odious if maintained by force, contemptible if obliged to yield to popular caprices.

[1] Napoleon to Murat, April 2.

Charles IV and his Queen made their entry into Bayonne on the 30th of April. Everywhere on their route Napoleon ordered royal honours to be shown to them, with a pomp and unusual ostentation which was all the more calculated to impress them, now that they had met with a different reception from the Spanish people.

On alighting from his carriage, the old King, who was far too simple and good-natured to be capable of perceiving the dark plots by which he had been entangled, threw himself, with tears in his eyes, into the arms of the man who had just ruined his house, brought shame and rebellion into the bosom of his family, and was about to put the whole of Spain to fire and sword. He pressed him to his heart and called him his friend and his support. Napoleon, with a smiling and serene countenance, accepted these signs of friendship, which, to any one of feeling or of honour, would have been more intolerable than curses. While this old man, whom, in return for his steady friendship, he had so basely deceived and ruined, thus overflowed with gratitude, and at the same moment, in an outburst of rage, repelled the embraces of his son, Napoleon occupied himself, like a consummate artist, in studying the physiognomy of the actors in this scene. Writing to Talleyrand the next day, May 1st, after a long interruption of their correspondence, he communicated to him his observations. 'King Charles,' he says, 'is an excellent man. I do not know whether it is his policy or the circumstances which give him the *air of a frank good man.* The Queen has her heart and her history written on her face, that says enough. . . . The Prince of Peace has the *look of a bull.* He is something like Daru. One may exonerate him from all imputation of deceit, *but we must throw a slight tint of contempt over him.*'

The portrait of the Prince of the Asturias was much less flattering. He was the only one of these different personages, it is true, who resisted his will. 'The Prince of the Asturias is very stupid, very malicious, and a great enemy to France.' No doubt Ferdinand VII fully justified this unpleasant prognostic later; but even had he been gifted with better dispositions, he could scarcely have turned out differently, after entering life

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under such auspices. Napoleon then related that he had got the couriers of the unfortunate Prince arrested, and that he had read with indignation the expression '*Maudits Francais*' in his letters. He was quite overcome by this horrible insult. When he added the shameless violation of private correspondence to his many other acts of treachery, he doubtless would have wished to find in his victim's confidential communications blessings lavished upon himself and upon his soldiers!

The aged sovereigns met their favourite with unbounded joy. Godoy at once informed them of Napoleon's intentions. They had neither the power nor the desire to oppose them. They wished for nothing but the repose and security of private life. Moreover their hatred to and resentment against their son, to whom they attributed all their misfortunes, had daily increased, and they seized the proffered opportunity of revenging themselves upon him with an almost savage ardour. The old King made Ferdinand come to him in presence of Napoleon, of the Queen, and of Godoy, and then, after having overwhelmed him with the most cutting reproaches, he summoned him to surrender to him the crown he had obtained by usurpation. The Queen, joining her husband, poured forth invectives and curses. The Prince, on his side, with impassive bearing, repelled the accusations in respectful but decided terms. But when he replied to their repeated and even menacing entreaties by a persistent refusal, the old King, who had almost lost the use of his limbs from rheumatism, made a tottering effort to rise, and brandished his cane over the head of the young man.

After this deplorable scene the question was discussed by letter. Ferdinand consented to restore the crown, but on condition that his renunciation should be made at Madrid, in presence of the assembled Cortes and in favour of Charles IV alone. Charles rejected these conditions in a letter dictated by Napoleon, in which he stated, 'That Spain could no longer be saved except by the Emperor.' (May 2nd.) Two days later he signed a decree in virtue of which Murat was invested with all power in Spain, and received the title of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. Still Ferdinand held out, and it is impossible to

say to what extremities Napoleon might have resorted in order to force compliance from his prisoner, had he not been spared further acts of violence by the important event which now occurred.

Towards four o'clock on the 5th of May, one of Murat's aides-de-camp—come full speed from Madrid—brought Napoleon a summary account of the insurrection that had just broken out in the capital. The circumstances which had accompanied and followed the entry of the French troops into Spain had so clear a meaning, so patent a character of fraud, of violence and of contempt for all the rights, and even for those innate susceptibilities which are usually respected in the most uneducated nations, that the irritation of the Spanish people against these hypocritical invaders, who brought them slavery in the name of fraternity, rapidly acquired the most alarming proportions. But Murat thought only of the throne which seemed within his grasp, and considered an insurrection as a happy accident which smoothed his road to it. Even Napoleon, far from dreading it, had been ardently desiring it ever since the princes had been within his power. He remembered the 13 Vendémiaire, the insurrection in Cairo, the old theme of his letters to Joseph. A good disturbance thoroughly crushed, and leaving behind it a lasting impression of terror, was in his eyes an excellent basis for a new rule, and the certain guarantee of durable tranquillity. As to a general uprising, an insurrection of a whole nation, he had never seen anything of the kind, and did not believe in such a phenomenon. Another of his opinions, not less erroneous, was that by holding Madrid he would hold all Spain. Judging of all countries by his prejudices in favour of centralization, he had not the least idea of the force still preserved by the provincial institutions of Spain, nor of the patriotism which they developed. He had foreseen the crisis, had wished it, and, if need be, would have provoked it, but of its danger he had no suspicion. For this reason he had desired Murat to select good military positions, to encamp his troops as much as possible in divisions, and in the environs of the town, and in case of a disturbance to occupy only the heads of the streets, without bringing the troops into play.

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The effervescence which so many successive surprises and humiliations had produced at Madrid, had been aggravated to the highest pitch by Murat's insolent and despotic proceedings. An opportunity alone was needed to make it burst forth into open war, and this unexpectedly occurred. Before long it became known that Napoleon's lieutenant was preparing to send the remaining members of the royal family to Bayonne,—the Infant Don Francesco, Ferdinand's youngest brother, Don Antonio his uncle, and the Queen of Etruria, with her children. The Supreme Junta, when Murat informed them of his intention, resolved at first to oppose him. But, having none but contradictory instructions from Ferdinand—one moment enjoining resistance, the next submission, according as resentment or fear predominated in his mind—and as the troops at their disposal in Madrid numbered only 3,000 men, they took fright and consented.

From early morn on the 2nd of May the mob collected in the Palace square, whence these departures were about to take place. The Queen of Etruria was the first to appear, and with her children entered the carriages, but she was little liked on account of her relations with Murat, and they allowed her to go without protest. There were still two carriages in the square, when a rumour was spread that the Infant Don Francesco was weeping and refused to leave. At this juncture one of Murat's aides-de-camp passed by on his way towards the palace, but the people attacked him, and his life was saved with great difficulty. Troops were then sent for at once, to disperse the crowd, and they fired on the unarmed mob, which separated with cries of vengeance in all directions. Isolated French soldiers were assassinated, though only a few, for Murat's troops had long been ready for combat. They occupied the principal outlets of the town and swept the streets with their artillery, thus making the struggle too unequal to last long. As soon as the ranks of the patriots were somewhat thinned, Murat drove in amongst them the cavalry of the Guard, the Polish lancers and the Mamelukes, who pursued the fugitives and cut them down on the very thresholds of their own houses. The

Spanish troops remained in their quarters, and took no part in the fight, except one company of artillery, who gave up their battery to the people, and whose officers, Velarde and Daoiz, died the death of heroes for their country. This was the only point in which the insurrection was able to offer any resistance, and once the battery of artillery was captured all was over. Our losses amounted to three or four hundred killed, and those of the insurgents to seven or eight hundred, so far as it is possible to calculate from the most contradictory accounts. The Junta at once intervened, and petitioned Murat for a general amnesty, which he promised in return for complete submission.

This promise of the French general restored order, and a large number of insurgents, relying on his word, had regained their homes, when they learned that the massacre had recommenced, this time without the pretext of an insurrection. Thinking, no doubt, that the lesson had not been sufficiently severe, Murat had caused many Spaniards who had returned to their occupations to be seized, and, in defiance of his plighted word, had a hundred shot without trial, affording a memorable example of the cold and calculating cruelty with which a thirst for power may inspire a man born with good and generous instincts. This time it was not repression, but the safety of his future kingdom which Murat had in view. He no longer acted as general but as king. He showed a truly royal soul, rising at one bound to the heights of a grand policy, leaving scruples to the petty spirits that are incapable of understanding reasons of state. He was creating titles to the crown of Spain which Napoleon could not disown without being untrue to himself, for never were the precepts of this master of Machiavellism applied with more vigour, fidelity and appositeness.

But the blood which Murat had just shed was not destined to profit either the master or pupil. As regards Napoleon, the 2nd of May may be said to have dealt a fatal blow to his power, so universal and profound was the execration it engendered in the heart of every Spaniard. To Murat it resulted in a cruel deception. One may believe that, in the depths of his heart,

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he felt some shame and remorse for having committed such atrocities, but how much more bitter must these feelings have become when he found himself robbed of their price? The same day upon which he had shot the Madrid patriots, Napoleon notified to him from Bayonne that he must for ever renounce this much-coveted throne—this throne for which he had shed so much blood and even committed perjury. He was offered, it is true, rich compensation, but compensation which he almost looked upon as an injury in the fever of pride and ambition that had taken possession of his mind. 'I intend the King of Naples to reign at Madrid,' wrote Napoleon to him. 'I will give you the Kingdom of Naples or that of Portugal. Answer me immediately what you think of this, for it must be settled at once.' (May 2.)

Before the reaction consequent on the rising and the butcheries at Madrid had begun to be felt throughout the kingdom, where it was destined to resound as a call to arms, Napoleon was justified in supposing that the happiest results would follow these events. They at once helped him to overcome Ferdinand's resistance, which hitherto he had been unable to subdue. King Charles, at the instigation of the Emperor, summoned his son once more to his presence, accused him of being the author of the insurrection at Madrid, threatened to make him responsible for it, and finally declared that now, more than ever, he had no other means left whereby to justify himself but that of renouncing the throne. And when the Prince, with downcast eyes remained obstinately silent and immoveable, Napoleon menaced him in violent language. 'Unless, between this and midnight, you recognise your father as the legitimate King, and write in this sense to Madrid,' he said to him, 'you shall be treated as a rebel.' These are the words reported by the Emperor himself in his correspondence, but credible witnesses affirm that he threatened Ferdinand with death, and this assertion contains nothing improbable. Terrified at last, the Prince yielded. He signed two successive renunciations, one dated the 6th of May, in favour of his father and in his capacity of actual king; the other dated the 10th, in favour of Napoleon,

in his capacity of heir to the crown. King Charles had not waited for these two acts in order to cede to Napoleon all his rights to the crown of Spain and the Indies, in exchange for the Châteaux of Compiegne and of Chambord, and an income of thirty millions of reals. (May 5.) Ferdinand, in exchange for his rights, received the Château of Navarre, with a revenue of 400,000 francs and a life-annuity of 600,000 francs. The three Infantas were assigned pensions. Napoleon thus acquired Spain and her colonies for a sum total of ten millions a year, but it was Spain herself which would have to pay the money! 'That will make in all ten millions,' wrote Napoleon to Mollien on the 9th of May. '*All these sums will be repaid by Spain.*' The history of this memorable transaction would be incomplete did we omit to add that in less than three months after the date of its signature, Ferdinand had to apply to the French treasury and entreat them to pay him the two first months of his pension.[1] That of King Charles was not better paid, and he did not receive his arrears of the month of July until September.

Napoleon was triumphant; radiant with joy. Henceforward who could contest *his rights*? Could stipulation or contract be more regularly concluded, or convention drawn up more in accordance with all requisite forms? One thing alone vexed him. King Charles seemed to reconcile himself very well to his share in the mishap; he was 'a good, excellent man,' but Ferdinand was gloomy and taciturn. 'As to the Prince of the Asturias,' he wrote to Talleyrand on the 6th of May, 'he is a man who inspires little interest. He is dull to that degree that I cannot extract a word from him. No matter what one says, he does not answer. Whether one chides him or pays him compliments, he never changes countenance. Those who see him may describe his character by one single word—*a sneak*.'

Napoleon could not conceive why Ferdinand did not evince more satisfaction. He almost expected him to show gratitude. What did this surly personage want? What else did he require? Had not everything been done according to rule? Ought he

[1] See, in the Memoirs of King Joseph, Azanza's letter to Urquijo, dated August 18, 1808.

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not to have understood that his sadness was insulting to the hero's joy? Napoleon hastened to remove this melancholy face from his sight. He sent the Prince and his brothers to Valençay, giving them an *escort of honour* of eighty *gendarmes*. With a flash of that cynical malicious irony which never abandoned him, he commissioned that grumbler Talleyrand to watch over their pleasures. 'I desire that the Princes be received without outward show, but *respectably*,' he wrote to him on this subject; 'and that you do everything possible to amuse them. If you have a theatre at Valençay it will be as well to send for actors. You might bring Madame de Talleyrand there with four or five ladies. It would be no harm *if the Prince of the Asturias were to take a fancy to some pretty woman, especially if one can be certain of her*. I am particularly anxious that the Prince of the Asturias should make no false step. Therefore, I wish him to be amused and occupied. Policy requires that he should be sent to Bitche, or *some strong place*. But, as he has thrown himself into my arms, has promised to do nothing without my order, and that everything in Spain is going on as I wish, I prefer sending him to a country place and *surrounding him with pleasure and surveillance*. If this can be made to last during the month of May and part of June, the affairs in Spain will have taken shape, and *I shall then see what course to take*. As for you, *your mission is honourable enough*. The reception of those illustrious personages, for the purpose of amusing them, is quite characteristic of the nation and of your high rank.[1]

We are not told what feelings were roused in Talleyrand's mind by the perusal of a letter confiding to him this *honourable mission;* but these ignominious instructions indicate clearly that he could not decline it with impunity, and that if this statesman became from henceforth one of Napoleon's most deadly enemies, grievances were not wanting to him.

The Emperor knew that Talleyrand allowed himself to comment freely amongst his intimates on the subject of this glorious enterprise. The diplomatist boasted that he had discountenanced

[1] The editors of the *Correspondance of Napoleon* have taken care not to publish this characteristic document. We owe it to M. Thiers.

it, and declared it impolitic and dangerous. Well! whether he liked it or not, he should find himself compromised for ever by it, compromised by having played the most vexatious and dishonourable part in it, by having acted at the same time as jailer and intermediate agent to the dispossessed Prince. And this is what Napoleon, revealing his grand soul to the pious Las Cases at St. Helena, called 'a sort of malice'! Charming malice, truly! one that worthily closes that long chain of infamy which terminated in the two treaties of Bayonne.[1]

Nothing now remained to be done but to take possession of this magnificent kingdom, which had been so cheaply acquired; for, though Spain was already inundated with our troops, we were still far from having occupied all its provinces. But Napoleon was convinced that this operation of taking possession of the country could present no difficulty, and that every one must, as a matter of course, be of the same opinion. 'I consider the most troublesome part of the business over,' he wrote on the 6th of May. 'There may be excitement now and then, *but the good lesson which has been given to the town of Madrid, together with the recent one at Burgos, must necessarily decide matters quickly.*' And on the 14th of May he wrote to Cambacérès: '*Opinion in Spain is taking the direction I desire. Tranquillity is everywhere re-established, and apparently will not be anywhere disturbed.*' Again, on the 16th, he tells Talleyrand: 'The affairs of Spain *are going on well* and will soon be *completely terminated.*'

Vain and pitiful illusion! No! The affairs of Spain were not terminated. They were about to begin! But were not appearances and probabilities altogether in his favour? Might he not believe—he, the master of so many empires—that he would easily subdue a nation without chiefs, without money,

[1] See and compare on this period the Memoirs of Cevallos, of Escoiquiz, Azanza, and O'Farrill, the documents published by Llorente, the *Mémoires historiques* of the Abbé de Pradt, the *Souvenirs diplomatiques* of Lord Holland, the History of the Comte de Toreno, the Memoirs of M. de Bausset. The Memoirs of the Prince of Peace, though written under his eyes, contain little useful information.

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without an army, and separated by the sea from every continental power except that one which oppressed it? Was it likely that a collection of townspeople and peasants could hold out against those legions that had conquered Europe? In this way everything combined to deceive him; everything, even to the unexampled inconceivable ease with which he had brought the preliminaries of his usurpation to a happy issue. His very successes only tended to hide from him all the more this snare of fortune. He had resolved to bring his armies into Spain; they had been received with open arms. He wished to make himself master of its strong places; they had been given up to him. He asked that the Spanish troops should be removed to a distance; they were at once sent away. He demanded the occupation of the capital; he had obtained it. He tried to attract the two Kings to France; they had come. He summoned them to renounce the throne; they had abdicated. From the first moment every one submitted to him, bowed to his will, yielded to his tricks or to his violence. He had not met with one single obstacle, neither amongst men or things, into such a state of decay, decrepitude and exhaustion had this old monarchy fallen. And now that he commanded one hundred and twenty thousand men within its frontiers, who would dare to speak of resistance? But it was precisely here that punishment awaited this invincible chief; for it was by means of this feeble adversary that Napoleon was to see himself seized and entwined by so strong, so firm a grasp, that nothing would be able to liberate him from it. Like the combatant in the ancient legend, he clove the trunk of this ancestral oak in two with the first blow of his powerful arm. But the disjointed parts suddenly drew together again, and his hand was caught in the living vice. He tried to free it, but the grasp grew tighter. The flesh and wood soon became like one, and the giant in distress shook the earth with his despairing efforts to release himself. Useless rage! The conquering tree holds him fast; enfolds its captive in a closer and closer embrace; night descends, and the wild beasts arrive and prowl around their prey.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE INSURRECTION IN SPAIN, ARRIVAL OF KING JOSEPH. (*May—July*, 1808.)

When the news of the fusillades of the 2nd of May circulated amongst a population that was already uneasy, agitated, and indignant at the presence of foreign troops in its territory, it produced a deep feeling of anger throughout the whole of Spain. But when the odious circumstances of the treachery at Bayonne, and of the two abdications which followed it, became known, there was but one general, instantaneous, and overpowering cry from one end of the peninsula to the other, a cry of vengeance and of extermination, destined to resound unto future ages, and such as the world till then had never heard! It seemed as though some great volcanic commotion had uplifted the soil of Spain over its whole surface. In one day and in one hour, without concert, and without watchword, the whole nation arose, animated by one common sentiment. These vast movements which carry along an entire people in one current of hatred, affection, or enthusiasm, were not new to Europe.

France had afforded this spectacle more than once during the many phases of its revolution, but there, as in all united and centralized kingdoms, it was at one time the capital, at another a few men who sprung up as dictators and willed and decided for the multitude. Then, with an enthusiasm and attachment that was often blind the multitude followed, leaving to them both thought and action. That which constitutes the originality

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and grandeur of this Spanish insurrection, and gives it its own special place in history, is not only the circumstance that every province, every town, and even every village rose without the knowledge of the other, but that each man in some sort dared, in his own individual capacity, to confront the tyrant of the world at this hour of extreme peril, and to declare war against him on his own account. It is always easy, and ofttimes somewhat inglorious, to follow a movement that carries crowds along with it, but when a man, standing alone without living witnesses and influenced solely by honour, forms a resolve with intrepid courage, which exposes his life and fortune to certain destruction, those who relate such facts ought to bow before them with respect, for they present that rare and sublime phenomenon called heroism.

This example was given by thousands of men who, at one and the same moment, took up arms and ran to the small centre of their canton or their province. Would they be imitated or supported? They knew not. One thing only they knew—namely, that they preferred death to ignominious submission to a rule imposed upon them under such auspices. Noteworthy is it too, that never in modern days had any conquest been accompanied by such revolting and hideous features. This invasion of Spain has a character of its own, even amongst Napoleon's undertakings, in which knavery always had so large a share. He had here surpassed himself; but, unluckily for him, he had also passed the bounds that could be tolerated by his contemporaries. Certain it is, that no nation in Europe had yet sunk so low as patiently to submit to the baseness which roused the Spanish people. This it was of which this greatest of men had no idea. Far from having perceived any one of the premonitory symptoms of a great national convulsion, he felt secure, confident, and self-satisfied. By an ingenious arrangement he had spared Spain the horrors of a conquest by violence, and, without effusion of blood, had obtained the price of ten years' carnage. The whole world ought to be grateful to him for the subtle and salutary expedient he had chosen, and the Spaniards before long would bless him as their *regenerator*. His vision

penetrated no further. In this respect, the absence of all moral feeling, the profound ignorance of those sensitive points inherent to honour, patriotism, and individual or national dignity, which forms one of the distinctive traits of this perverse mind, amounted to a blank in his intellect. For his acts of treachery, although so laboriously arranged, completely defeated their own aims, his deep-laid schemes were gross blunders, his crime almost folly. Not to have suspected or not to have foreseen the effect that such base deeds would naturally produce on a proud and passionate people, betokens an aberration of judgment well-nigh incredible, and it is not difficult to imagine that Napoleon might have gone so far as to compose a forgery in the hope of saving his reputation for genius, even at the sacrifice of his honour. But in order to exonerate himself he should have written his whole correspondence anew; an omission which shows, no matter what may be said to the contrary, the most strange and inconceivable blindness, not only before the insurrection, but long after it had broken out under his eyes.

The heroic and desperate resolution with which the news of the events at Bayonne inspired the Spaniards had all the suddenness of an explosion. Some days however were required for organization. The outburst of feeling occurred between the 24th and the 30th of May, and almost everywhere under analogous circumstances. The signal did not originate in town or country; but was given on all points simultaneously. In the hamlets, in the villages, on the roads, men animated by one thought collected spontaneously. They marched together to the chief town or to the capital of the province. There they found the inhabitants in revolt or on the point of rising. They deposed the authorities who shewed hesitation, or gave them cause for suspicion, appointed insurrectionary Juntas, seized arsenals and armed the population after having passed decrees for levies *en masse*. Voluntary contributions flowed into the treasury of the new government, and every man capable of bearing arms enrolled himself under its banner. Nobles, peasants, citizens, monks, priests, soldiers, all classes vied with each other in zeal and energy. Nothing is more false or untenable than the

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opinion of those who still persist in representing this insurrection as the '*work of the monks.*' This is the old theory invented by Napoleon for the purpose of casting dishonour on those whom he could not conquer; I shall soon show its origin and the small foundation upon which it rests. To the honour of the Spanish clergy it must be said, that far from evincing the ordinary complacency of the Catholic Church towards those whom it calls the established powers, they declared themselves energetically in favour of the national movement. But they did not lead it, they followed it, and, at the outset especially, fluctuations were more than once apparent in their conduct. Nor can it be forgotten, that amongst those who were most eager to salute the ephemeral reign of Joseph at Bayonne, the representatives of the Holy Inquisition figured in the front rank.

Religious enthusiasm, no doubt, had its influence in the Spanish insurrection. This influence, moreover, increased when Napoleon, who had at first showered caresses upon them with the utmost care, finally perceived the uselessness of trying to win over the priests, when once he had declared war against the Pope, and broke with them in the hope of thereby gaining the adhesion of all who held philosophical opinions. But it is as untrue to attribute this revolt to religious fanaticism, as it is to give the honour of it to monarchical fanaticism, which others have endeavoured to do. Its strength and its glory consist in its having united all sentiments and all opinions, from the superstition of the peasant to the almost republican patriotism of the university student. Side by side with battalions that were enrolled in the insurgent army under the banner of the Saints of Spain, were to be found the companies of *Brutus and Cato*, and the company of the *People*, with their device, '*Liberty or Death.*'

This revolt was essentially a revolution of independence, and that it was which rendered it invincible. It will continue to be an everlasting lesson to nations whose national existence is menaced, by teaching them to prefer the most terrible sufferings to the rule of strangers, even when presented to them under the disguise of apparent ameliorations.

In the midst of the extraordinary unanimity of this insurrection, two classes of men alone seemed disposed, not only to ratify what had been done, but to accept a state of things which they looked upon as inevitable. Such were those who, at all times and in all countries, the most readily bend to circumstances, namely, the officials and the courtiers. Still it must be said, that their defection was not merely very partial, but very passing, for the immense majority of the former either remained faithful to the national cause, or returned to it after a short period of hesitation; and as to the latter, being attached to the Court, and not to the Monarch, it was necessary to be as simple-minded as Joseph to wonder either at their eagerness or at their desertion. Besides, it must be admitted that good reasons for submitting to or accepting the new state of things were not wanting to either the one or the other, and they preached that resignation to their countrymen which seemed justified by the laws of necessity. What did they wish, or what did they hope for in organizing resistance? Did they entertain the mad idea of conquering Napoleon's armies? No! such a delusion could not enter any sensible mind. The only possible result of the insurrection would be defeat, an irreparable defeat, because it would add the evils of anarchy to those of war. The ease with which the fall of the old dynasty had been brought about clearly indicated that it was an 'end fixed by Providence.' In accepting a new sovereign from Napoleon's hands, Spain in no way gave up her independence. She saw it more solidly founded than ever, and supported by all the strength of the empire. Freed from an incapable and worn-out dynasty, and governed by a prince whose personal qualities and enlightened mind were his credentials, Spain might at length participate in the reforms and improvements enjoyed by other nations, and resume the high place she had once held amongst the European powers.

All these advantages, of which they would almost immediately reap the benefit, ought to make them forget irregularities that were certainly to be regretted, but had now passed into the domain of incontrovertible facts; and good citizens could now

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only have one thought, that of preventing irreparable misfortunes by a prompt adhesion to the new rule.[1]

These sophisms were specious. At first especially more than one sincere patriot allowed himself to be deceived, from the fear of seeing so many generous efforts end in the ruin or annihilation of Spain. But popular feeling never wavered for an instant, and in preferring death even to the promised happiness, its vision was more just and far-seeing than that of the wisest men. Whenever political calculations are at fault, the instincts of the simple-minded triumph; for heroism, like genius, is a matter of inspiration not of reason, and in all desperate cases a Joan of Arc will always be superior to a Machiavelli.

The principality of the Asturias was of all the Spanish provinces the first to declare itself, if one may ascribe the lead to any one in particular in a movement which was essentially simultaneous. This small country, hidden away in the extreme north, between the mountains and the sea, had been the last refuge of the warriors of Pelayo at the period of the Arab invasion. Its energy and patriotism rendered it worthy to serve as the cradle of a war of independence. On the 9th of May the Junta of the Asturias, assembled at Oviedo, decided amidst the acclamations of the entire population that it would disobey the orders of Murat; and its President, the Marquis de Santa Cruz, declared that 'wherever he saw a man rise against Napoleon, he would shoulder a musket and march beside him.'[2]

Towards midnight on the 24th of May the alarm sounded in the town and surrounding villages; they seized the commanding officers sent by Murat, and took possession by storm of the arsenal, which contained a depôt of a hundred thousand muskets. Next day the Junta met, organized the defence, and decreed a levy of 18,000 men. This done, the representatives of this country, so small as to be almost imperceptible on the map of Europe, animated by inexpressible enthusiasm, solemnly

[1] These statements are in no way imaginary. They are the abridgment of those which the Extraordinary Junta of Bayonne and the Supreme Junta of Madrid addressed to their fellow citizens at the time.

[2] Toreno, *Hist. of the Spanish Revolution.*

declared war against the oppressor of nations. A sublime act of folly, as worthy of the notice of history as that immortal inspiration which impelled Sparta's three hundred sons to confront a whole army! And in commencing this inconceivably unequal struggle, the Junta of the Asturias was so convinced that they were limited to their own resources, and acting entirely in their own private name, that without waiting for or consulting any one, they forthwith despatched two deputies to England to ask for the assistance of the British forces. One of these was the Viscount de Matarosa, the same who, better known later as the Count de Toreno, has left us the most faithful and the most judicious description that has been published of these events. The envoys of the Junta landed at Falmouth during the night of the 6th of June, 1808, and at 7 o'clock on the following morning they were admitted to the Admiralty. They brought Mr. Canning the declaration of war which the Junta of the Asturias had just made known to the Emperor of the French and King of Italy, and with it the request addressed to His Britannic Majesty. On reading this extraordinary message, Canning's keen intellect, supplying the information which was wholly wanting, at once perceived what a violent shock the Peninsula must have experienced to have produced such unheard-of events. He comprehended that emotion so vivid and profound could not be an isolated fact, and that this was only one episode of a vast conflagration. He promised the deputies the energetic support of Great Britain, and soon gave them an official assurance of this support in writing, and in the name of the Cabinet.

The moment the mountaineers of the Asturias sounded their war-cry, a similar cry answered them from Carthagena, at the other extremity of the Peninsula. These events were hastened by the popular desire to preserve to Spain a squadron which Napoleon had ordered to Toulon under Admiral Salcedo. This shameful spoliation taking place in open day, as though it were a most lawful act, filled the inhabitants with anger and indignation; and the news of the abdications at Bayonne arriving at the same moment decided them to revolt. They knew that the squadron must first put into Mahon. Thither they would go to stop it.

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They rushed to the residence of the Captain-General, deposed and replaced him by one of their own adherents, appointed an insurrectionary Junta, and opened their arsenals and depôts of arms to the neighbouring provinces. That done, they hurriedly sent a naval officer to Mahon to forbid Admiral Salcedo to quit that post or allow the squadron to escape its captors (22nd and 23rd of May). Murcia instantly imitated Carthagena. Another town on the same coast, the rich and populous Valencia, did not wait for the signal to rise. The reading of the abdications in the *Gazette de Madrid* sufficed to rouse the people, and in one hour the whole town resounded to the cry of 'Long live Ferdinand; death to the French!'

Unhappily the people did not confine themselves to words, as in the majority of towns with a large heterogeneous population the irritation of a multitude excited to frenzy produced lamentable scenes, in spite of the efforts of many courageous citizens to prevent them. The Count of Cervellon having betrayed the insurrection whilst pretending to serve it, escaped a well-merited death through the devotion of his daughter, who tore the written proofs of his treachery from the hands of his accusers; but Baron d'Albalat,—innocent, though suspected,—was torn to pieces by a furious mob; a fresh instance of the mistakes made by those summary judges, who condemn without discretion and strike blindly. Some days later the people of Valencia, under the influence of a fanatical priest, Canon Calvo, dishonoured their revolution by the massacre of the French residents in the citadel. But these assassinations were soon punished by the execution of Calvo and his partisans, and the town, ashamed of its excesses, effaced them before long by exploits that reinstated it in the eyes of the world.

These sanguinary scenes, which often are the inevitable results of the commencement of war, were far from common at the beginning of the insurrection; one may even maintain that they were exceptional, especially if the violence of the passions in play are to be taken into account.

French subjects established in Spain were almost everywhere protected against popular fury, notwithstanding the hatred of

which they had become the objects. As to those officials who were attacked, though their punishment was both excessive and irregular, their adherence to Murat's government was very properly considered a crime. In several towns they were only deposed; in others they were simply enrolled in the insurrection. At Valladolid the Captain-General of the kingdom of Leon resided, Don Gregorio della Cuesta, an old soldier and a good patriot, but of a haughty and obstinate character, accustomed to believe in military force alone, and considering resistance in consequence useless. The rebels, seeing that neither entreaties, arguments, nor threats, could induce the old general to join the insurrection, raised a gibbet in front of the balcony of his house, and summoned him to choose between death or taking command of the insurgent forces. This peremptory mode of reasoning put an end to Cuesta's scruples; he was either intimidated or more probably perceived that energy of this description might be used as a powerful instrument of deliverance.

The revolt of Gallicia had quickly followed that of the Asturias, the two provinces touching at many points. By this event the ports and arsenals of Ferrol and Corunna, for the possession of which Napoleon had long been labouring, fell into the hands of the insurgents. But the murder of the Captain-General Filangieri was here to be deplored, a man beloved for his amiability and uprightness.

The revolt of the province of Santander closely threatened to disturb our communications with the Pyrenees, which the rebellion of the kingdom of Aragon exploded at Saragossa; there the people chose a hero in the person of Don Josè Palafo. In short, Old Castile and Catalonia completed in a few days the insurrection of all the northern provinces; the Basque provinces alone, being overrun with our soldiers in all directions, abstained from joining the movement. The whole of the South was already in flames. There, as elsewhere, the people had flown to arms, without having the slightest idea of what was going on in the rest of Spain. The insurrectionary Junta of Seville was so convinced that it stood alone and was

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acting for all, that it naïvely adopted the title of 'Supreme Junta of Spain and the Indies,' persuaded that it formed the last asylum of Spanish patriotism, and parodying in its own way the beautiful lines of the poet—

'Rome is no longer at Rome;
Where I am is Rome.'

This fine national impulse was unfortunately stained by the murder of Count del Aquila. Andalusia was the province which contained the greatest number of Spanish troops, thanks to Napoleon's precautions in having them sent to a distance from Madrid. There were a good many at Seville, more at Cadiz, and at the camp of St. Roque near Gibraltar. These arrangements, supposed to be preventive measures, had the effect of making Andalusia, which moreover possessed natural fortifications in the precipitous heights of the Sierra-Morena, the most formidable centre of the Spanish insurrection. The troops quartered at Seville having at once joined the rebellion, the Junta immediately sought to secure Cadiz, the best port in the Peninsula, and also the camp at St. Roque, where its largest army was stationed. The emissary despatched to Cadiz there met with unexpected obstacles. The Captain-General of Cadiz was that same Solano who had made the campaign in Portugal as an ally of Junot. Discontented at first with the wretched part he played in that enterprise, but won over later by Murat's flatteries, Solano had resigned himself to the idea of accepting the new order of things. After doing all in his power to stop the movement, he finally, albeit with a bad grace, submitted to it on perceiving its irresistible force, and promised to obey the popular will.

But it was no longer in his power to dispel the distrust and resentment which his tergiversations had excited amongst a people, of whom, only a few days ago, he had been the idol. He was seized and put to death in one of the squares at Cadiz, and died with a courage that would have done him honour if it had been shown in the service of his country. Don Thomas de Morla was appointed Captain-General in his stead, and the Junta ordered him to attack the French fleet which had been

blockaded in the port of Cadiz since the catastrophe of Trafalgar. He summoned Admiral Rosily, who commanded it, to surrender, and made the necessary preparations for bombarding the squadron in case of resistance. Rosily gained a few days by negotiations, then took up his position in the middle of the harbour, beyond the reach of fire from the town, convinced that he would soon be released by Dupont's corps selected to occupy Andalusia.

Jaen and Cordova promptly joined the movement at Seville. Granada with one accord armed all its able-bodied population, and carried along with them the Swiss troops under the command of Theodore Reding, at Malaga. At Badajoz, the capital of the Estramadura, the people waited, as in many other towns, for the feast of St. Ferdinand (May 30th). They then rose almost under the guns of the French who were occupying Elvas, a short distance off, and at once set about repairing the fortifications of the town, which were falling into ruin. In a brief period the Estramadura boasted an army of 20,000 men which rendered eminent service by intercepting Junot's communication with the French army of Andalusia.

This rapid glance at the insurrection of Spain shows with what harmony and spontaneity this great commotion burst forth. It were as puerile to account for it by the influence of any particular class, or special superstition, either monarchical or religious, as to attribute the formation of the ocean to a small stream. It was not monarchical sentiment that was irritated against Napoleon, for he certainly was not bringing a Republic to Spain: nor was it religious sentiment, for, without taking into account the decline of religious thought which had occurred everywhere, even in Spain, consequent on the philosophical disputes of the eighteenth century, Napoleon was still regarded by the Spanish clergy as the restorer of altars, and the great supporter of Catholicism. As yet they knew nothing, or almost nothing, of his quarrels with the Pope. But what he had wounded and roused by irreparable insults were, first of all, those elementary sentiments of honour and of justice which every man bears in his own conscience, and next, that grand sentiment,

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alike individual and collective, which includes every other, and which is called patriotism.

During the development of this great national crisis, in which Spain was to acquire new vigour or to perish, Napoleon, still at Bayonne, strove to hasten, first, the arrival of his brother Joseph destined by him for the throne of Spain, next, that of the recalcitrant deputies who, willingly or unwillingly, were to offer the crown in the name of the people, and, finally, what he was pleased to call the *re-organization* of a kingdom that no longer was his. He had signified his intentions to Joseph in a brief and peremptory letter that admitted of no objections: 'It is for you that I destine this Crown,' he wrote to him, '. . . at Madrid you will be in France, Naples is the end of the world. I desire, therefore, that immediately on receipt of this letter you give the regency to whomsoever you like, the command of the troops to Marshal Jourdan, and then start for Bayonne. . . . . You will receive this letter on the 19th, you will leave on the 20th, and you will be here on the 1st of June.' (May 10.) This imperious tone was purposely adopted on account of Joseph's known repugnance to leave a kingdom where he considered himself firmly established, and also on account of his facile and complaisant character. It is very probable, indeed, that during his journey to Italy, Napoleon may have spoken to Joseph of his elevation to the throne of Spain as a possible contingency. If he offered this crown to Louis later, he did so, according to all probability, in consequence of the little eagerness displayed for it by his elder brother. Certain it is, in any case, that Joseph quitted the kingdom of Naples most reluctantly, and left it, if not altogether inclined to disobey, at least little pleased with the change that was imposed upon him and with a secret hope of escaping from it.[1] But Napoleon took every precaution beforehand that was necessary to force acceptance, more or less, upon Joseph, and that he should find himself pledged to it before he could have time for reflection. From the beginning of the month of May he had endeavoured to obtain

[1] See Miot de Melido, who rather disagrees on this point with the *Souvenirs* of Stanislas Girardin, and the *Memoirs* of King Joseph.

a proclamation from the Supreme Junta of Madrid and the Council of Castile calling Joseph to the throne of Spain. The Emperor hoped thus to make the treachery of Bayonne seem an act of deference to the national wish. But these two assemblies, after allowing him to ask them over and over again, only sent him a most guarded answer. He then flattered himself that he would manage better by a phantom assembly of the Cortes. He convoked its members to Bayonne, like those Cisalpine deputies who a few years before he had collected together at Lyons, and who came to secure the liberty of their country, and left again after having delivered it up to him.

This Extraordinary Junta, commissioned at the same time to give a king and a constitution to Spain, was convoked for the 15th of June. It was to contain representatives of the nobility, clergy, religious orders, universities, army, commerce, colonies, and even of the Inquisition. In reality it was composed, partly of those grandees of Spain who had accompanied the Princes to Bayonne and had been detained in France by Napoleon, partly of those functionaries who were anxious to secure their position under every government, partly, in fine, of such individuals as a large supply of promises, threats, or flattery, is always certain to attract. It was to comprise one hundred and fifty deputies, but little more than half that number came.

This solemn parody of the forms and principles of national sovereignty was to be only the prelude to Napoleon's combinations. In devoting himself to the regeneration of Spain he had above all in view the appropriation of its resources. This was what he had done in every country the prosperity of which he had taken in hand; exactly what he had recently done in unhappy Portugal, and one must not attribute a beneficent or civilizing motive to plans that were solely inspired by the covetousness of an ambitious spirit. The feverish impatience with which Napoleon occupied himself about the finances, the navy, and especially the Spanish colonies, was altogether due to the illusion which led him to suppose he would find enormous resources such as might enable him to carry out his

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projects throughout the rest of the world. It were an insult to our readers if we represented this as a noble and generous desire to make the usurpation be forgotten by an accumulation of benefits. Truly, if he had been capable of such virtuous feelings, it was not the opportunity of exercising them which ever failed him. Amongst the nations which he held down beneath his rod of iron, he would have had no difficulty of choice, had he wished to make this species of philanthropic atonement. But unluckily every page of his correspondence is there to prove, that in occupying Spain he thought only of himself.

At first he was dazzled by the idea that he was about to put his hand on so many rich possessions. He calculated the number of piastres which Mexico would bring him in, and despatched messengers to the Spanish colonies in all directions with the romance of the Bayonne abdication, arranged in such a manner as to prevent a rupture. He counted the vessels on his fingers, and the formidable support which the Spanish navy and the numberless ports of the Peninsula would afford to his squadrons. Before the end of September 1808 he intended to have thirty-five war vessels. These thirty-five ships added to the forty-two he already possessed, and to the fifty-four which he levied from the allied powers and even from Russia, would constitute a total armament of 131 vessels of war.[1] This thought excited his imagination, and he readily exclaimed, as at Boulogne, 'England is mine!' He wrote six letters in one day to poor Décrès, descanting upon the magnificent plans he had in contemplation. But, at the very hour that he was developing these fantastic views, which never existed except on paper, and which by a singular freak have been honoured by the name of reorganization of the Spanish navy, all the ports of the Peninsula were in the hands of the insurgents. To give an idea of the little advantage which Spain was to derive from this impulse to her maritime resources, it is enough to say that he destined all these armaments for a gigantic expedition, either against Egypt and the Indies, or against Algiers, or, in fine,

[1] Napoleon to Décrès, May 28, 1808.

against Sicily in order to avenge the check there experienced by Ganteaume, who failed even before his operations had commenced.[1] The most certain advantage which the Spanish squadrons could have derived from his solicitous care would have been, had they been led again to a second Trafalgar.

The meaning of the *reorganization* which Napoleon contemplated in the Spanish army is even more clear than that of his intended improvements in the navy. It consisted simply in making the few troops that remained to Spain march off to France. He proposed to send them on later to the North, 'so as to let them share the glory of Romana's corps'; a glory that consisted in dying of cold and *ennui* on the shores of the Baltic. Finally, as to the finances: when he had well ascertained that the Spanish treasury had not a dollar left, he contrived the ingenious device of making the bank of France lend Spain twenty-five millions on the security of its crown diamonds.[2] Nay, more: it must be noted that if he destined a part of this money for the navy, in order to press forward naval constructions, by far the larger portion was to serve for payment of his brother Joseph's installation expenses. Is it not, therefore, mere mockery to represent such acts as a conception of genius, which if it could have been carried into effect, would have secured the grandeur and happiness of the Spanish people?

In truth, these were but very visionary castles in the air (*châteaux en Espagne*), which would vanish at a touch. But he who constructed them was so infatuated by success, that he was convinced no enterprise, whether good or bad, could fail from the mere fact of his having undertaken it. The unexampled facility with which his new conquest had been achieved had raised to a degree of intoxication this power of imagination, which at all times had formed the strength and weakness of his genius, but which he better managed to control at the beginning of his career. He no longer doubted anything. He was now and for ever the legitimate and definite master of the magnificent

[1] Napoleon to Décrès, 26, 28, 29 May, 1808.

[2] Napoleon to Murat, May 28; to Mollien, June 3, 1808.

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monarchy of Charles V, upon which the sun never sets. He was, as the *Moniteur* certified, '*invested with all the rights of the house of Spain.*'[1] The heir of so many kings no doubt existed somewhere, but reduced to a kind of mendicancy, and in such a miserable plight that Napoleon turned away in disgust. Will it be believed? This poor wretch still remembered that only a month ago he called himself King of Spain! Of all his titles he had retained but an inoffensive formula, the only remnant of so much splendour, and he ventured to use it in the trembling supplications which he addressed to the all-powerful Emperor. Napoleon was outraged by the audacity and impropriety of this Lazarus of royalty. 'My cousin, Prince Ferdinand,' he writes to Talleyrand, 'when writing to me, *calls me his cousin.* Try to make Monsieur de San Carlos understand *that this is ridiculous*, and that he ought *simply to call me Sire.*' Does not this equal the 'Call me simply Monseigneur,' of the regicide Cambacérès? The sovereign of these vast states is he himself and no other, and it must not be supposed that there ever has been another. And he sends his orders to his subjects, like a king by right of birth, with the perfect certainty of being obeyed. He orders some to the Cortes of Bayonne where he requires their adhesion, he distributes to others governorships in the colonies, he sends to Gregorio della Cuesta his appointment as Viceroy of Mexico. But the Cortes do not come, the colonies refuse to acknowledge him, and on the very day that Napoleon despatches his commission as Viceroy of Mexico (May 26), Gregorio della Cuesta accepts the command of the insurgent forces of Leon and Valladolid. Truly the Emperor so far is only the sovereign of an imaginary kingdom.

Napoleon's imperturbable confidence, which almost approached somnambulism, extended also to the military operations, and even the most important news of the formidable insurrection which had broken out failed to disturb it. The Emperor not only was blind to its approach, but when it did break out he had no idea of its force nor of its extent. Murat having

[1] *Moniteur* of May 16, 1808.

manifested apprehension from the beginning, and shown some slight symptoms of tranquillizing the population by kind treatment, Napoleon reproached him with weakness, and advised him 'to bring his intellect to the aid of his strength of mind.' (May 17.) What did Murat fear? Was not every measure of precaution taken? Nothing serious was anywhere to be dreaded?

It was the same story in Portugal, whence Napoleon borrowed four thousand men from Junot to send them to Dupont, who he then despatched to Andalusia and Cadiz. What could Junot be afraid of? '*The English are not ready to make any attempt, for they know well that they will be crushed.*'[1] Thus he wrote when Sir Arthur Wellesley was on the eve of effecting his landing. Had not Junot still a corps of 8000 Spaniards, besides his own troops? It never crossed his mind that these Spaniards might think of revolting. As to Dupont, he gave him only 9000 soldiers wherewith to invade Andalusia and to occupy Cadiz. But, had he not also 8000 Swiss who were in the service of Spain, and on whose fidelity he could equally rely?

All these military arrangements were thus built on suppositions, and when the revolt reached that point which required vigorous and decided action, his illusions, far from vanishing, changed into a blindness of which history offers but few examples. He committed a primary fault in obstinately directing the operations from a distance, and without quitting Bayonne; a mania for which he had himself severely blamed the directors and the committees of the Convention. He committed a second in dividing his forces contrary to his own principles, instead of uniting them in order to strike boldly. If we are to credit his own estimate,[2] Napoleon had at that moment in the Peninsula an army of 110 or 120,000 men, independently of those in

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, May 18.

[2] This calculation is taken from a monthly return dated the 18th of July following, and which estimates our total force in Spain at 116,000 men. This number could not have materially varied from the beginning of June. Moreover, it was only a minimum.

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Portugal. This, though insufficient to subdue a nation rendered fanatical by hatred of the foreigner, was sufficient to occupy good defensive positions even in the centre of the country, and to defeat every insurrectionary army which might venture into the plain, until the arrival of reinforcements would permit them to undertake more. But such aims were too humble for Napoleon. He resolved to crush the revolt at the same moment in every locality where it had broken out. He sent forth his troops in various directions, taking the precaution, it is true, of supporting these detachments by corps of lesser importance, which were to rejoin them in case of necessity, but without foreseeing the possibility of these corps being unable to effect their junction, as more frequently occurred. Thus, when ordering Marshal Moncey to march on Valencia, he detached General Chabran from Barcelona to take up a position at an intermediate point between Barcelona and Valencia. These tactics were adopted throughout. A detachment sent by Junot and the Vedel division, were to support from a distance Dupont's movement upon Andalusia.[1] The Sabatier brigade was to help from afar the expedition of Merle against Santander,[2] and of Verdier against Logrono. Finally, he despatched a small corps of three or four thousand men from Madrid, to reinforce if necessary the ten thousand men whom he had sent against Saragossa under the orders of Lefebvre-Desnoettes.[3]

The same obstinate determination to occupy the entire country by means of corps in echelon, and the same scattering of his forces, are everywhere observable. He was convinced that his troops had only to show themselves in order to disperse these contemptible gatherings. Everywhere too he gave his generals the same instructions: 'To *make examples.*' They long since knew what that word signified in his mouth. To burn, to pillage, and to shoot; such was the sanguinary programme, of which some amongst them nobly evaded the performance, but which the majority carried out with a rigour that

[1] Napoleon to Murat, May 30. [2] Napoleon to Bessières, June 3.
[3] Napoleon to Murat, June 8.

had already engrafted itself not only on the tastes but even on the habits of the army.

These arrangements, insufficient though they were, at first had a semblance of success. Our troops easily worsted the insurgents when they met them in the plain or intrenched in a town without fortifications. Verdier defeated them without trouble at Logrono, Frère at Segovia, Lasalle at Torquemada (June 6), where a series of executions began by a regular massacre; then, at the bridge of Cabezon, and before Valladolid, where Gregorio della Cuesta made his troops fight with their backs to a river. Merle, sent to Santander, after having helped Lasalle to gain his victories, beat Velarde with as little difficulty at Lantueno; while Lefebvre-Desnoettes in his march against Saragossa successfully defeated the Arragonese bands at Tudela (June 8) and at Mallen (June 13). In all these affairs the resistance offered by the insurgents was wellnigh insignificant. We had only to fight gatherings of citizens and peasants, ill-disciplined and ill-appointed, whom the rapidity and harmony of our movements thoroughly bewildered. Nothing gives a better idea of their inexperience and natural inferiority than the proportionate losses on either side. At Logrono they had one hundred killed and we but one; at Cabezona they had upwards of five hundred, and we from fifteen to twenty; at Tudela three hundred, and we ten; at Mallen, in fine, they lost nearly one thousand men, and we scarcely twenty. Moreover, the greater number of these unfortunate victims fell during their flight beneath the swords of our cavalry, far more than in the actions, which lasted but a few moments. By these proportions one sees that they were true butcheries and not battles in the ordinary acceptation of the word. And yet those who thus massacred fugitives incapable of defending themselves, and who brought devastation into a country where no single interest, passion, order, nor even shadow of a grievance summoned them, called their action glory. Those, on the contrary, who died on the threshold of their invaded hearths while invoking all that man holds dear and sacred, called it brigandage.

The two expeditions of the East and the South, especially

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Dupont's, which was to prove so disastrous, opened under auspices no less brilliant than those of the North. Moncey, who was to subdue Valencia, advanced by measured steps to Cuença, about half-way from Madrid (June 11), and there he prudently halted until Chabran, who was to second him by starting from Barcelona, and keeping close along the coast, should have made sufficient progress to allow him to advance further. Chabran likewise had begun his march on the 4th of June, and had pushed forward to Tarragona. But the whole of Catalonia was in revolt behind him, notwithstanding the many strong places we occupied in several points. General Duhesme found himself blockaded by the insurrection in Barcelona to a degree that endangered his communications with the expeditionary corps, and Chabran was obliged to halt like Moncey, but with far more fear of being obliged to retrograde. Some days later they learnt that Desnoettes' easy triumphs had come to an end before Saragossa, where he was held in check by Palafox.

Dupont's march towards Andalusia had been more fortunate and more rapid. On the 1st of June this general, with fourteen thousand men, impetuously entered the long defiles of the Sierra-Morena, which before long were to witness his defeat. Dupont may be said to have been one of Napoleon's favourite generals. At Albeck, at Halle, and at Friedland, he had brought himself into notice by brilliant and dashing deeds. He was on the point of being made marshal, and Napoleon had offered him the campaign in Andalusia as an opportunity of meriting this longed-for crowning of his military career. He started, therefore, full of ardour, of hope, and of desire to distinguish himself. Like Moncey, he was to collect numberless Spanish and Swiss auxiliaries on his way. But he underwent the same disappointment, and could only muster some two thousand Swiss whose doubtful fidelity stood in great need of encouragement. At Baylen he learnt that the whole of Andalusia was up in arms, and that he would have to fight several regular battles before he could reach Cadiz. Nevertheless he persisted in marching on Cordova by Andujar. The army of Cordova,

anxious, like that of Seville, to fight on its own account, came to meet him as far as the bridge of Alcolea on the Guadalquivir. Dupont defeated it easily, in spite of his own numerical inferiority, but he experienced greater resistance than he expected, and his losses were more considerable than those of the other generals engaged at the same time (June 7). He pursued the Spaniards sword in hand along the road to Cordova, and appeared before that town after a forced march of several hours under a burning sun. Having ineffectually summoned the place to surrender, he burst open the gates with his cannon, and his soldiers rushed in, killing and devastating everything they found on their passage. They entered the houses, and indulged in low revels; then, in a state of intoxication, they pillaged the Cathedral, forced open the public chests, sacked the convents and dwellings of the rich. The General took from the Treasury depôts alone the sum of ten million reals for the wants of the army.

After this fine exploit, Dupont, in order to fulfil his mission, ought to have immediately marched on to Seville and Cadiz, but he did not feel himself strong enough to advance further, and shut himself up in Cordova whilst waiting for reinforcements that might enable him to finish his task. Thus abruptly following successes, which were more apparent than real, at the opening of this complicated campaign guided by Napoleon from Bayonne, a general halt was everywhere perceptible, in consequence of the insufficiency of our forces compared with the number of the enterprises; Moncey had stopped at Cuenca, Chabran at Tarragona, Lefebvre-Desnoettes at Saragossa; Duhesme, in fine, was shut up in Barcelona, Dupont at Cordova. By the 15th of June everything had become uncertain, and we were held in check on all points, from the one defect of these detached operations.

Far from suspecting the danger of this position, Napoleon continued to entertain no doubts of success. On the 9th of June he loudly proclaimed the triumphant entry of Dupont into Seville, and of Moncey into Valencia, adding that Joseph's approaching entry into Spain would 'finally dissipate the dis-

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turbances, enlighten all minds, and everywhere re-establish tranquillity.'[1] It is not difficult to conceive that the first advantages gained over the insurgents might have thus deceived him, but the bad news received during the next few days in no wise opened his eyes. He was only irritated by Moncey's slowness, and again ordered both him and Chabran to march on Valencia. He considered the taking of Saragossa so certain that he sent a colonel of engineers 'to put the castle into an efficient state of repair, so that it might keep the town in check.'[2] In short, on the 19th of June, when all the elements of this difficult position were known to him, he went so far,—with a species of aberration that seems scarcely credible,—as to command that simultaneously with the disarmament of the rebels companies of national guards should be formed in each town to assist the Alcaldes, assume the responsibility, and maintain the tranquillity of the country. He adds, 'This is what ought to be done at Toledo, at Aranjuez, at Segovia, and *everywhere else*.'[3] It was to his confidant Savary,—recently gone to Madrid to supply Murat's place, who had fallen dangerously ill from vexation at his failure,—that Napoleon communicated this bright idea.

Fortunately, he had at length under his hand at Bayonne a wonderful specific, which, according to him, would infallibly put an end to the disturbances in Spain. Such troubles and disorders ought, in his opinion, to surprise no one. At all periods they had been the inevitable accompaniments of every crisis called an interregnum. The presence and the coronation of King Joseph would restore order, and rally round him not only the lovers of peace, but also those numerous classes, who more than all else require a settled state of affairs. Joseph was known in Europe to be a sovereign of a gentle, peaceful disposition. No doubt the Spaniards, if once forced to choose between such a prince and the evils of hopeless anarchy, would end by adopting him, at least as a last resource, despite their

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, June 9, 1808.
[2] Napoleon to Berthier, June 17, 1808.
[3] Napoleon to Savary, June 19, 1808.

distrustful national susceptibility. Joseph, therefore, must accept the crown and show himself as soon as possible to his people, in order to reassure, tranquillize, and conciliate them. Napoleon was perfectly aware that Joseph had left Naples with regret, and he was by no means sure of his final resolve. He determined, in consequence, to hurry him on and to dazzle him from the instant of his arrival, so as to leave him no time for reflection.

Joseph had started towards the end of May. As soon as he knew of his approach to Bayonne, Napoleon, without waiting for his arrival, hastened to publish a decree proclaiming him King of Spain and the Indies, grounding it on the urgent necessity of 'securing the happiness of Spain by putting an end to the interregnum.' The decree made allusion, it is true, to the wishes of the Junta, of the Council of Castile, and of the municipality of Madrid; but this mention was in no wise meant to be a mark of deference to the national will; and Napoleon transmitted his rights after the manner of a king of the old régime. This decree appeared on the 6th of June; next day, the 7th, Joseph arrived at Pau and heard of his accession. He knew nothing as yet of what had occurred in Spain, for all news had been most carefully intercepted. Napoleon went to meet him some leagues from Bayonne. He made him get into his carriage, overwhelmed him with demonstrations of tenderness quite unusual on his part, and then with customary impetuosity revealed to him all the plans he had devised for the prosperity, grandeur, and consolidation of the new monarchy.[1]

When the two brothers reached Bayonne, poor Joseph had scarcely found an opportunity of putting in one word during the pauses of this brilliant monologue. At Bayonne the scene changed. The traveller was not allowed one moment's repose. On descending from his carriage the Empress met him at the foot of the stairs surrounded by all her ladies-in-waiting, ready to congratulate him on his new kingdom. Another surprise

[1] See Miot de Melito, the Memoirs of King Joseph, and Toreno, so well-informed on this point.

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awaited him in the interior of the palace. When he entered the Hall of State, Joseph was received by all the deputations which Napoleon had obliged to come to Bayonne,—some willingly and some by force,—from all the towns occupied by the French army. There were assembled men, some of whom bore the greatest names in Spain; the Dukes of Ossuna, of Infantado, and of Frias, the Prince of Castelfranco, the Counts of Santa-Colonna and of Fernan-Nunez; and at their side bishops, former ministers, courtiers, high functionaries, and even one inquisitor, Don Raymond Ethenard y Salinas. And all these great personages were submissive and devoted subjects, with the bearing and protestations of such. They saluted Joseph as king with acclamations. Then each of the deputations which composed the Junta came forward in turn to present an address of felicitation.

Joseph, suffering from the excitement which is the ordinary result of a long journey, and fasting, moreover, from early morn, although it was then almost ten o'clock at night, was enchanted, intoxicated, and half bewildered by this unexpected reception. Naturally vain, he accepted these orations with delight, and with the air of a man only half awake and not quite certain whether it were not the continuation of a dream. A most disagreeable incident, however, soon struck a false note in this concert of benedictions, and betrayed the concealed art of the stage effect which was so good an imitation of nature. The Duke of Infantado, after having read the congratulatory address in the name of the grandees, let fall some fearfully discordant words. 'Sire!' said he to Joseph, 'the laws of Spain do not permit us to offer anything else to your Majesty. *We expect that the nation will make known its views and will authorize us to give free expression to our sentiments.*' This sudden reference to the Spanish nation and its slighted rights produced an extraordinary effect on Napoleon. He rushed to the Duke, overwhelmed him with reproaches, desired him to go and join the insurrection rather than shield himself behind such subterfuges, and finished by his customary strong argument, namely, by threatening to have him shot.

The Duke, intimidated, made excuses, and his seditious address was instantly modified; but the episode cast a chill over a ceremony which had gone on so well hitherto.[1] The encouraging terms in which Joseph addressed the inquisitor in reply to his compliments were much noticed, for the French having come to Spain in the name of progress and as missionaries of civilization, it was supposed that they would at least have taken to themselves the easily-earned credit of abolishing an odious and unpopular tribunal. But it was not until later, when they perceived the inutility of their efforts to conciliate the clergy, that they deemed fit to make this concession to philosophical opinions. Joseph, with his most affable smile, replied to the inquisitor, 'that, although there were other countries where several different forms of worship were permitted, Spain ought to consider herself fortunate that on her soil none but the *one true religion* was honoured.' It was impossible to make a more clear promise to respect the principle of a State religion.

This solemnity terminated, Joseph was king. He could no longer withdraw. Within the next few days, although he did not yet know what a crown of thorns he had placed on his head, he began to catch a glimpse of the truth: but it was too late to reject this fatal present, he was king, and Napoleon was not the man to allow him to turn back. On the 15th of June the deputies of this Junta, which was so appropriately called *Extraordinary*, commenced their sittings, notwithstanding the insufficiency of their numbers, and in compliance with a short empty form proceeded to discuss the projected constitution, which they were permitted, not to examine, but to approve of. It were superfluous if not fastidious to stop to consider this stillborn production, a feeble copy of all the lucubrations in the same style which emanated from Napoleon. These morbid compositions do not present even those outward appearances by which the people are so readily caught. They breathe nothing but uniformity, void and emptiness. I shall merely recall the fact that this *regenerator* of Spain dared to

[1] Cevallos, de Pradt.

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offer the country as a precious gift, a senate in which figured two Committees of *Individual Liberty* and *Liberty of the Press*, that worked so well in the French Senate, and a legislative body, *whose deliberations were to be secret.* The first article of the Constitution stated that, 'the religion of the State is the Catholic religion. *No other is permitted.*'[1]

Joseph then formed his ministry of the men he found around him, and of whom the majority had already served in that capacity. Many amongst them were distinguished for talent. They had rallied round him from different motives: some affected by the malady common to men who have once exercised power, others in the chimerical hope of being able to change the current of affairs. Urquijo was Secretary of State, Azanza Minister of the Indies, Mazzarredo Minister of Marine, O'Farrill and Cabarrus, of War and Finance; Cevallos, of Foreign Affairs. Napoleon had destined Jovellanos the historian, an upright and popular man, for the Ministry of the Interior, but Jovellanos refused it, notwithstanding the entreaties of some of his friends. None the less did Napoleon publish his appointment in the *Gazette de Madrid*, either in the hope of more easily gaining him over when once compromised in this manner, or of dishonouring him in the opinion of the national party by a persistent calumny, which Joseph had not the courage to stop. It was the fate of this man who had been made king against his will, at the same time to have ministers against their will. Lastly, Joseph appointed his great functionaries. At length, on the 7th of July, all was finished and in order; the proclamation of the new king, the everlasting gratitude of the courtiers, the constitution, the appointments about court, the oaths of fidelity, the commemoration medals. Nothing was wanting to Joseph but subjects.

[1] See the Spanish Constitution in the *Moniteur* of July 15, 1808.

CHAPTER IX.

CAPITULATIONS OF BAYLEN AND CINTRA: THE FRENCH RETREAT TO THE EBRO.

(July—September, 1808.)

DURING the three weeks occupied in these preparations for the new reign, the position of our army in Spain was growing worse; no reinforcements could be drawn from any quarter nearer than the Rhine and the Elbe, with the exception of a few old regiments lately returned to France, and which Napoleon had been obliged to disperse in different directions. On the other hand, the strength of the insurrection was daily increasing. On the East, Marshal Moncey, having been ordered by Napoleon to march at all hazards on Valencia, reached that place about the end of June, after several severe encounters on his way. Moreover, an assault which was attended with the loss of three hundred men, forced him to admit the impossibility of taking Valencia, and he had to return to Cuença amidst countless dangers. On the West, the Spanish insurgents not only held their positions, but they had become considerably stronger in consequence of a most serious event. The whole of Portugal had risen against Junot, who far from being able to send detachments to Bessières and Dupont, as ordered by Napoleon, had the utmost difficulty in maintaining himself at the points he already occupied. In the South, after having waited in vain for Dupont's promised arrival, our squadron at Cadiz was obliged to surrender to the insurgents.

General Dupont, dreading the loss of his communications in the Sierra-Morena, and finding his position at Cordova

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endangered by the army of Castaños, who held him in check on his right towards Seville, and by the army of Granada marching on his left towards Jaën, had retreated to Andujar. There he was protected by the Guadalquivir, and backed by the opening defiles of the Sierra-Morena. By Napoleon's orders, Savary sent to his support the Vedel division, hitherto stationed at Toledo, which had been selected as an intermediate point. But this assistance, though useful in maintaining his communications, was in no wise sufficient to enable Dupont to resume the offensive.

The Spanish army of Andalusia, of all the armies of the insurrection, was not only the most numerous, the best disciplined, and the most formidable from the number of regular soldiers it contained, but was also the one composed of the most fiery spirits.

The mutilated bodies of their comrades on the retreat from Cordova to Andujar, had horrified our soldiers, and shown them that they had to do with an enemy who would neither give nor expect any quarter.

Neither in Italy nor Germany had they ever been punished for the sacking of towns. It seemed to them that it produced a salutary impression on the inhabitants, and, as it suited their instincts for pillage and debauchery, they availed themselves of the first pretext that offered to indulge these propensities. At Lubeck, the passage of a few bands of fugitives through the town, though without the consent of the inhabitants, had been used as the signal for fearful destruction. A shot fired from one house was often sufficient. Yet the Germans received our soldiers with kindness, and in consideration of their light-hearted, thoughtless gaiety, they constantly pardoned them the confusion they caused wherever they appeared. Machiavelli remarks that of all nations the French are those whose exactions are the most readily endured; because, he says, they do not know how to preserve the fruits they gather, and ordinarily spend it amongst those whom they have robbed.[1] The adventurers of the Empire pillaged with life and gaiety, as may be seen by the songs of

[1] *Ritratti de Francia.*

that period, which are full of the praises of Venus, Bacchus and Bellona; that is to say, of lust and drunkenness in conjunction with war. They had apparently persuaded themselves that they acted all these parts with so much grace, that no one could, on that account, bear them ill will. But the Spaniards, more susceptible than the Germans, resented these pleasantries. Immediately after the sack of Cordova, they systematically began killing every isolated soldier within their reach. At times they massacred them with an unexampled refinement of cruelty, for the express purpose of making a deep and terrifying impression on their invaders, and which in fact produced a most painful effect. Dupont's corps, on its return to Andujar had, in consequence, lost in a great degree that assurance which is so necessary an ingredient to the moral bearing of a soldier.

The small reinforcements at Napoleon's disposal had been sent in part to Saragossa, of which General Verdier had just assumed command of the siege (July 1), and in part to Catalonia, where Duhesme was so much harassed by the insurgent corps, that he had been obliged to recall Chabran from Tarragona. The remainder were destined for Bessières, who, stationed with a large force at Burgos, was commissioned to keep the insurgents of Gallicia, of the Asturias, of Leon, and of Old Castile, at a respectful distance. They were still commanded by old La Cuesta, now aided by General Blake. Bessières' corps, according to Napoleon's idea, was the one which ought to strike the decisive blow in the campaign. To Bessières he reserved the honour of gaining a kind of Spanish Jena victory. All the other operations, even those of Dupont and Moncey, were secondary. The plains of Old Castile were, according to the Emperor, the key of our military positions. This once taken, all the other defences of Spain would fall of their own accord. Napoleon's illusion on this point was complete, and it is revealed in a manner that leaves no room for doubt, both in his letters to Joseph, and in the innumerable and circumstantial notes he dictated for Savary. To Bessières all the disposable

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reinforcements should be sent, for he it was who should protect Madrid—'*and there was everything*';[1] if Dupont experienced a check 'it would be of little consequence, but any blow to Marshal Bessières would *be a blow aimed at the heart of the army, and one which would paralyse it.*'[2] Savary from his presence on the spot saw matters from a more sensible point of view than his master,—for one must be just to Savary,—and took upon himself to send to Dupont, in answer to his vehement requests, a fresh reinforcement composed of Gobert's division. Napoleon blamed him severely for it. '*Dupont has a larger force than he requires.*' It was to Bessières that Gobert should have been despatched. 'I am angry,' writes Napoleon, 'that Savary does not feel the fault he has committed in hesitating to reinforce Bessières. . . . It was for this Marshal that I destined Gobert's division.'[3] And in the note I have already quoted, he adds the following observation, which more clearly conveys his thought, '*The true manner of reinforcing Dupont is by sending troops to Bessières.*'

Events were soon to prove to Napoleon by a terrible lesson that in this he was radically wrong, but it is not superfluous to show how and why he deceived himself. This great Captain here committed an error analogous to the one he so often turned into ridicule at the beginning of his career, when one of his adversaries reproached him with 'not fighting according to rule.' He now applied to the Spaniards the political and military routine which had served him so well when opposing the old centralized monarchies of Europe, without perceiving that he had now to deal with circumstances of an entirely new character, and that neither the men nor the nature of things resembled those he had had to contend with hitherto. A Jena had been possible against a military kingdom, because the regular troops which form the strength of such a state, if once destroyed or dispersed, being by their very nature incapable of re-constituting themselves, the state was left defenceless. But the case was

[1] Notes for Savary, July 13. Sixth observation.
[2] Ibid. Fourth observation.
[3] Napoleon to Joseph, July 13.

altogether different with forces recruited by the insurrection; first of all, because being all volunteers, they spontaneously re-formed after a battle, and also because each army stood alone, for at that moment there were as many armies in Spain as there were provinces. The incredulity with which Napoleon refused to see the force and gravity of this revolt was due to illusions of another kind, or rather to the very constitution of his intellect. His thoroughly calculating mind could not conceive the idea of such wild or disinterested fanaticism, or understand the fit of heroic madness which had seized a whole nation. It was a moral phenomenon completely above his comprehension. That miserable conscripts, recruited by pressure of the gendarmerie, should allow themselves to be killed for a piece of ribbon, or a cross, for promotion, or that false coin called glory, seemed to him not only most natural, but an ordinary fact, like the course of the seasons. But that poor peasants and inoffensive citizens, without being paid for it, or forced to it, should let themselves be killed for their country and for liberty,—for that *old humbug* as the imperial soldiery styled it,—was something quite beyond his powers of imagination; these, verily, were old women's tales! True, he had seen the movement of 1792; but that was now like distant antiquity; moreover, Spain could scarcely be considered revolutionary. No less a mistake was it, to imagine that in holding Madrid he held everything else. When he had taken Berlin he was master of Prussia. When he had taken Vienna he was master of Austria. That was very nearly the truth. But whoever took Madrid was simply master of the ground occupied by the capital. In Spain, thanks to the strength and power of resistance of the provincial constitution of that country, the centre was everywhere and yet nowhere. It was useless, therefore, to dream of creating a theatrical effect on any one single point, for such a point did not exist. And the army of Cuesta was no more the head of the insurrection than Madrid was the heart of the country. All the phantasmagoria of grand military effect was here at fault, without the possibility of its being put into play. Submission was definitively imposed on none,

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except on those who were killed, and, as Joseph wrote a month later, 'a hundred thousand permanent scaffolds would have been required to maintain the prince condemned to reign over the Spaniards.'[1]

How powerful soever may be the verdict of established prejudice in favour of Napoleon's marvellous faculty of penetration, it is impossible not to admit that these striking characteristics of the Spanish insurrection totally escaped his observation, and this in spite of facts and of the most clear and positive information. He did not begin to open his eyes until after his army had been thrown back upon the Ebro. Joseph had entered Spain on the 9th of July. Henceforward the Emperor received the wisest and most urgent warnings day by day; from a witness, too, who certainly had no motive for disguising the truth. From the instant he trod upon Spanish soil, poor Joseph perceived that no one sided with him. The aspect of the abandoned villages, the fierce countenances he met with on his road, the coldness with which his advances were received, the increasing embarrassment of those who had embraced his cause, and were now regretting their adhesion—in short, his own complete isolation, convinced him of the profound and universal hatred entertained towards the French domination, as well as of the inadequacy of our army to subdue twelve millions of rebellious men. 'No one has hitherto told all the truth,' he wrote to Napoleon on July 12; 'the fact is that not one single Spaniard comes forward to take part with me, except the small number who were present at the Junta, and those who travel with me; the others who have reached this, are hiding themselves, dismayed by the unanimous opinion of their countrymen,' —and he concludes by demanding 'a great many troops and money.'

Besides this discovery, Joseph made another no less wounding to his self-love, namely, that the generals, and even Savary, took no more account of his royalty than if it did not exist, and while outwardly rendering him homage, continued, nevertheless, to obey the Emperor alone. He made loud complaints

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, August 14, 1808.

to his brother, asserting with truth that as he bore the burden, he ought at least to possess the power. The Emperor, discontented with Savary, who had exceeded his instructions by sending reinforcements to Dupont, this time, as an exception, pretended to disapprove of his lieutenant. He speaks of Savary with supreme contempt, and blames *his incapacity*. 'He is a man *fit to execute orders*,' he says, 'good for secondary operations, but who has neither sufficient experience, nor powers of calculation to guide so large a machine.' But this satisfaction in words was all that Joseph could obtain. So long as Napoleon lived there should be no other power in Spain but his. Like Murat, Joseph cherished the idle hope of attaching his new subjects to him by the gentleness and affability of his proceedings, and desired to select his ministers from amongst those men who were most highly esteemed. He wished to put a stop to the pillaging habits which disgraced the French army, and to remove from the government a man like Savary, who as he expressed it, *had filled the lowest offices*. His representations, however, were received with contemptuous pity, like the complaints of a sick child, or the visions of an enfeebled mind. But this state of affairs was about to change, at least so it was confidently predicted at Bayonne. Bessières could at length fight the long expected battle against Cuesta and Blake, which was to decide the fate of Spain. These generals had under their orders an army of about 25,000 men, recruited in Gallicia, in Old Castile, and in the Asturias; but they were divided by feelings of rivalry, detrimental to unity of command, and their troops though animated by the best spirit, were little more expert than at the outset of the campaign. Bessières' forces, it is true, were inferior in numbers by almost one-half, but the formation of his army, composed for the greater part of excellent troops, gave him a great advantage over his opponents. From Burgos, then his head quarters, he advanced rapidly towards the insurgents. He met them on the 14th of July, near Medina de Rio Seco, between Valladolid and Benevente. He attacked them with impetuosity, and the rebels, heavily and awkwardly ranged in two lines, were in no way

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able to support each other. They were petrified with surprise at the rapidity of our movements. Bessières at first concentrated all his efforts against Blake's corps, which was soon disbanded, and not until they took to flight did the regular troops of Cuesta come forward to recommence the fight. In their first rush they overthrew all before them, and even captured one of our batteries. But all Bessières' forces were then turned against the Spanish reserve. Charged by our cavalry, it quickly lost its advantages and in its turn soon fell back. Then the whole of our line advanced together against the insurgents, whose retreat was changed into a fearful rout. This was the moment to make what Napoleon called an example, and General Lasalle's cavalry was commissioned to execute the movement. They dashed forward in all directions in pursuit of these 25,000 fugitives maddened by fright, and massacred four or five thousand that had remained on the battle-field. On our side we lost but seventy killed and three hundred wounded. The town of Medina de Rio Seco was instantly seized and given up to pillage.

The example was as complete as if Napoleon himself had presided at the operation; and truly he looked upon this victory as a great and decisive event. In his eyes the revolt was henceforth knocked on the head. 'This,'[1] he writes to Joseph, 'is the *most important event of the Spanish war*, and gives a decided tone to affairs.' Ordinarily so sparing of praise, he now congratulated Bessières in the most unmeasured language. 'No battle,' he writes to him, 'was ever gained under more important circumstances; it decides matters in Spain.'[2]

Joseph, though desirous enough to let himself be persuaded of this, was nevertheless obliged, in spite of these reassuring prognostics, to acknowledge that all was not over, as he would fain believe. He made his entry into Burgos whilst the impression of this terrifying victory was fresh on the minds of the inhabitants, but far from finding their spirits cowed by the reverse

[1] Napoleon to Joseph, July 17, 1808.
[2] To Bessières, same date.

at Rio Seco, he there read on every countenance the same expression of hatred and defiance which had struck him as he advanced into Spain. 'Fear does not make me see double,' he wrote to his brother. '. . . Since I have been in Spain, I every day say to myself, my life is of little value, and I give it up to you. . . . *I am not frightened by my position, but it is unique in history. I have not one single partisan here.*'[1]

Savary, who was more in the centre of Spain than Joseph, was still further dismayed by what he saw and heard, as well as by the alarming news he received from Andalusia. In his trouble he had taken upon himself to command a general concentration of troops upon Madrid, and to write to Bayonne that everything had yet to be done in Spain. Napoleon at once sent him an order through Berthier to countermand this retrograde movement, although, had it been carried out in time, it would have saved Dupont's corps; and, in formal terms, he censured the sensible view of affairs taken by Savary. Berthier wrote, 'The Emperor considers that you are wrong in saying that nothing has been done during the last six weeks. . . . Every sensible man in Spain has thoroughly changed his opinion, and regards the insurrection with the utmost grief; affairs are in the most prosperous condition since the battle of Rio Seco.'[2] In accordance with this, Napoleon desired that the offensive should be resumed on all points. He consented, however, though not until the 18th of July, that Gobert's division should be sent to Dupont. Savary had despatched it many days previously, but even this succour did not preserve us from Baylen. Napoleon was never more tranquil, nor more confident of the success of his enterprise. On the 21st of July he considered the moment had arrived for quitting Bayonne in order to make a journey through the southern provinces of France, and before starting he dictated a long despatch in which he thoroughly examined all the contingencies of our military position, and pointed out to each general the line of conduct he should take. He particularly studied

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, July 18, 1808.

[2] Berthier to Savary, July 18. Letter inserted in the *Correspondance* of King Joseph

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Dupont's position, 'upon which,' he says, 'every care should be bestowed.' He praises him 'for having kept his place beyond the mountains in the basin of Andalusia,' which definitively shows that he approved of his halt at Andujar; he desired him to resume the offensive with his five and twenty thousand men; 'for,' he adds, 'there is not the least doubt that *even with twenty thousand men General Dupont will overthrow everything before him*'; then, after having ordered Moncey to re-occupy San Clemente, and to continue to threaten Valencia, Verdier to press the siege of Saragossa, and Reille to form a junction with Duhesme in Catalonia, he thus reviews the situation:

'*There is nothing to fear* on the side of Marshal Bessières, nor in the north of Castile, nor in the kingdom of Leon; *there is nothing to fear* in Arragon, Saragossa will fall some day, sooner or later; *there is nothing to fear* in Catalonia; *there is nothing to fear* for the communications from Burgos to Bayonne . . . the only menacing point is on the side of General Dupont; but with 25,000 men *he has many more than he requires to achieve great results. . . . Strictly speaking, with one and twenty thousand men he will have more than eighty chances in a hundred in his favour.*'[1]

This despatch was dictated at Bayonne on the 21st of July, 1808; and on that same day, Dupont, defeated and surrounded at Baylen, signed the capitulation in virtue of which his whole army became prisoners of war. We must turn back a little, in order thoroughly to understand the causes of this memorable disaster.

Intrenched at Andujar since the 18th of June, after he had evacuated Cordova, Dupont occupied a very insecure position on the Guadalquivir. This river, almost dried up in summer, was fordable in many places, and was little more to him than an imaginary line of defence. The front of his army, therefore, was almost uncovered; the rear no better protected. The position of Andujar was supposed to close the entrance to that long defile of the Sierra-Morena which stretches from Baylen to

[1] Notes on the actual position of the army in Spain, July 21, 1808.

Valdepeñas, passing by Guarraman, La Carolina, St. Helena, and Despeñas-Perros; but it in no way served this purpose, for besides the main route which traversed these localities, there existed three or four other small roads, practicable for infantry, and which, starting from Mengibar, Linares, Baëza, and Ubeda, met, not only at Baylen, but at La Carolina and even at Despeñas-Perros, that is to say, at all the principal points of our communication with Madrid. If it were necessary to guard this passage of the Sierra-Morena effectually, a retrograde movement should have been made to La Carolina, which is its key, for even the position of Baylen could easily be turned. At all events, anything being preferable to standing on the defensive in bad positions, it would have been better for Dupont to have commenced the attack, choosing his own time for it, especially when he had received the reinforcement of 6,000 men which Vedel brought him at the end of June. But he had strict orders to stay at Andujar. Savary, who had a far clearer idea of Dupont's position than Napoleon himself, wished to recall him from beyond the mountains when he formed the plan, so sharply criticized by the Emperor, of *drawing everything close to Madrid*;[1] the excessive displeasure however which every retrograde movement caused the latter, made him postpone this project, and he did not decide upon it until too late.

Such was the situation of Dupont in the first days of July, 1808. Charged with the defence of positions devoid of strength, in a feverish and unhealthy country, he had to fight the strongest and the most numerous army then in Spain, with but 18,000 men, for the most part very young and inexperienced, and whom in consequence of the scarcity of provisions he was moreover, forced to place upon half rations. The troops of every arm commanded by Castaños after the junction of the insurgents of Grenada with those of Seville, of Jaen, and of Cadiz, amounted to not less than 35,000 men, of whom more than half were regular troops.

[1] Savary's correspondence with Dupont leaves no doubt upon this matter. In a letter of July 16, he formally announces to him his intention of soon recalling him towards Madrid.

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Dupont, it is true, received a new reinforcement of 4000 or 5000 men on the 7th of July, brought to him by General Gobert, but this succour in no degree restored the balance. In order to guard his communications, perpetually harassed by guerilla bands, Dupont was obliged to disperse his Andujar troops beyond La Carolina, and to keep them constantly moving. The impracticable task he had to accomplish might thus be summarized: with a total force of 22,000 men he had to watch and defend the line of the Guadalquivir from Andujar to Ubeda, along an extended front of fifteen leagues; and in his rear, to guard a defile twenty leagues in length.

On the 15th of July, after somewhat feeling his way, Castaños commenced his operations. Two of his lieutenants, Reding and the Marquis of Coupigny, the one a Swiss, the other a French *emigrè*, took up positions on the Guadalquivir, the former at Mengibar, the latter at Villanueva, both threatening to turn Baylen and Andujar, while Castaños himself, posted at Arjonilla, menaced Dupont's camp in front. This general had foreseen the attack. He had placed Vedel's division at Baylen and General Liger-Belair with some troops before Mengibar. At Andujar, the action was limited to a cannonade between Castaños and Dupont. At Mengibar, Liger-Belair, repulsed by Reding, was reinforced in time by Vedel, who arrived in haste from Baylen, and drove Reding back beyond the Guadalquivir. So far all went well. It was evident from this, however, that the enemy, thanks to his numerical superiority, could multiply his attacks on many more points than we were capable of watching at the same moment. In order to guard one we were obliged to withdraw our guard from another, no less essential to our safety, and the result of this going to and fro could not fail to become most dangerous to us.

Dupont, foreseeing that the attack was about to recommence, and somewhat alarmed at the number of troops displayed by Castaños on the 15th, despatched an order to Vedel, to send him a '*battalion*, and in case he had few enemies in front, a *brigade*.' Next day, the 16th, his over-zealous lieutenant, hearing the cannonade recommence on the side of Andujar,

hastened thither, not with one brigade, but with his entire division, leaving nothing at Mengibar but Liger-Belair's detachment. This fault at once entailed its own punishment; for, the instant Vedel had left, Reding reappeared at Mengibar, forced the passage of the Guadalquivir and drove off Liger-Belair, who had to retreat in the direction of Baylen. The position at Baylen was occupied by General Gobert, who had come thither on the previous evening from La Carolina. At the sound of cannon, he hurried to Liger-Belair's aid, but a ball struck him dead, and General Dufour, who assumed the command, was driven back on Baylen. In this manner the ferry of Mengibar, so important to us, came into possession of the Spaniards.

Dupont, who had at first approved of Vedel's movement, perceived the gravity of the fault that had been committed the moment he was informed of Gobert's death and of the defeat of his division. On the same evening, the 16th, he ordered Vedel 'to move rapidly on Baylen, there to form a junction with Dufour's corps, and then to drive the enemy back on Mengibar across the river.' On the morning of the 17th he confirmed this order, recommending him, moreover, to keep watch on Baëza and La Carolina, points so essential to our communications. Vedel had already arrived at Baylen, but, to his extreme surprise, he had found no one there. Led astray by false reports, the truth of which he found it almost impossible to ascertain,—for, not even at the sacrifice of gold had we a single spy in Spain,—Dufour had started at midnight to go in search of the enemy in the direction of La Carolina. Reding, however, had been able meanwhile to reach it without passing by Baylen, having at his command the choice of two cross roads which terminated at La Carolina: the one by Linares the other by Vilches. Vedel, deceived like Dufour, but above all impressed with the importance of preserving our communications, and of supporting his colleague, also marched to La Carolina, neglecting to make a reconnaissance at Mengibar, lest Dufour might be crushed during the time it would involve; and Dupont, deceived in his turn, entirely approved the course he adopted. In this manner errors

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were linked together, which in this complicated state of affairs may well be termed inevitable, for, even had they not occurred, other mistakes quite as serious would have been committed. Vedel rejoined Dufour at Guarraman. The reports of Reding's march to La Carolina being there confirmed, the two generals pushed forward deeper and deeper into the defiles of the Sierra-Morena, at the same time leaving two posts of the greatest importance unoccupied behind them, namely, Baylen and Mengibar, which they believed to be secure from all attack, as they supposed the enemy to be entangled in the Sierra (July 17).

Meanwhile Reding, whom they were seeking so far off, had never left the neighbourhood of Mengibar. He had taken advantage of the appearance of some guerilla bands in the Sierra to strengthen current rumours, the effect of which was to disperse his adversaries. The moment he became aware of their absence, he occupied Baylen with a strong force, in conjunction with Coupigny's division, and thus cut off from Dupont's corps its natural line of retreat. This movement he effected during the day of the 18th of July, with about 18,000 men. No doubt he ran the risk of being himself placed between two fires, in the event of Vedel's speedy return, but under every circumstance his retreat on Mengibar was secured. Moreover, by combining his movements with those of Castaños, still stationed before Andujar, he possessed such superiority of forces over Dupont, that he was justified in believing he would have time to crush him before any diversion could take place. Nor was it until late on that same day that Dupont heard with dismay of the presence of one of the enemy's corps at Baylen, and even then he could not ascertain its full strength. He determined however to evacuate Andujar instantly, in order to relieve Baylen and to place himself again in communication with his lieutenants.

Night having fallen, Dupont decamped secretly, and, thanks to his precautions, succeeded in escaping the vigilance of Castaños, who remained before Andujar. Dupont had still about 11,000 men, composed of the Barbou division, of the Frésia cavalry, the marines of the guard, the guards of

Paris and one Swiss regiment. Compelled to keep watch on both sides simultaneously, while embarrassed by an interminable file of from seven to eight hundred carriages conveying his sick and the baggage, he placed his vehicles in the centre, and, dividing his troops into two corps, sent the weaker one to the front, as he conceived Reding to be less formidable than Castaños. A distance of not less than a league separated these two corps of combatants, which, had they been united for the first attack, might perhaps have forced the passage. About three o'clock on the morning of the 19th, on reaching the Rumblar—a torrent that flows at a short distance from Baylen—the head of our columns came into collision with the outposts of Reding, who, on his part, was preparing to march on Andujar. The action commenced at four o'clock, but with only two brigades on our side, a force barely sufficient for maintaining the defensive. The remainder of our troops, recalled in all haste from the rear to the front, took part in the fight, but in successive detachments, which deprived their efforts of the union and strength necessary to form an opening in the ranks of the enemy. Our soldiers rushed to the attack with distinguished valour, and drove back the first Spanish line several times, but they did not succeed in repulsing the second; and Reding's artillery, far superior to ours, dismounted our batteries in a few moments.

Towards ten o'clock that morning the Spaniards rushed on our position on all sides. Cavalry charges vigorously executed by the dragoons of General Frésia and the chasseurs of General Dupré, drove them back in disorder on their own corps d'armée, but this did not gain us any advantage. The Spanish reserve continued unshaken. Soon however the fighting slackened; our soldiers, worn out by a march of seven leagues, and by the insupportable heat, suffering too from fearful thirst in this waterless desert, lost heart and grew dejected; and ultimately fought with each other for the possession of a cistern, or for a few drops of water in the dried-up torrent bed. Dupont, in despair, tried to make a last attack towards midday, but it failed like all the others, Reding's army presenting

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an impenetrable barrier. One thousand five hundred men, many officers among the number, were disabled, and Dupont himself was wounded. The heights were crowned by armed peasants, who fired on us from behind the shelter of rocks and woods, while the Swiss soldiers, displeased at having to fight against their compatriots in the Spanish army, deserted. Before long cannon were heard in our rear. It was the army of Castaños, which, under command of Peñas, hastened to take part in the battle, and thus closed all issue to us. How was it possible to resist this fresh army, when we had not been able to conquer the first? This was the final blow. It was just two in the afternoon when Dupont asked Reding for a suspension of arms, to which he consented. But the capitulation which he demanded at the same time, with the view of obtaining his free passage to Madrid, was referred to Castaños, who refused it to him, requiring the unconditional surrender of his whole corps d'armée.

During these negotiations, which continued through the evening of the 19th and a part of the morning of the 20th, General Vedel, having returned from La Carolina, where he found no one to oppose him, and having lost much valuable time, came to take up his position at the rear of Reding's army. Reaching Baylen after the battle, about five in the afternoon, he immediately attacked the Spaniards, who were reposing on the faith of the armistice, and captured a thousand prisoners, besides several guns. But a stop was soon put to this combat by an order from Dupont, which informed Vedel of the negotiations then going on with the Spaniards. Castaños' refusal, however, afforded Dupont an opportunity of recommencing the battle on the 20th of July, with the assistance of the Vedel division. If his position between Castaños and Reding was most critical, that of Reding between Dupont and Vedel was no less unfavourable.

A bold stroke executed with that energy of which Dupont had given an example at Albeck, at Halle, at Friedland, and on so many other occasions, might very probably have opened a passage, though no doubt at a great sacrifice. But his soldiers were

thoroughly demoralized, overpowered by fatigue and the privations of every description from which they had been suffering for the last two days. Dupont himself was disheartened, in proof of which we may note the fact, that instead of acting with ready resolve upon his own responsibility he assembled a council of war, when, according to the very terms of the deliberation, he 'asked its advice on the situation of the corps d'armée.' Heroic resolutions are rarely collective, and yet an inspiration of this nature could alone have saved him. Dupont was capable of experiencing one of these sudden illuminating flashes. He had proved it on many an occasion, but he was one of those soldiers whose elasticity depends more on his imagination than on his natural disposition, and whose mind is, in consequence, more liable to pass from one extreme to the other. He was a man of pleasure and of imagination, a pleasant and cultivated conversationalist, possessing literary tastes; and even since he had become a general, he had competed for prizes in poetry. His writings shew a decided inclination for pomposity and declamation; and even in his despatches there is no trace of the vigour and precision of military style. In fine he had never met with any reverse, and was one of those men whose value depends on success. Nor had he ever been Commander-in-Chief, and now upon the first occasion, when he was left to himself, he found himself in a position beset with difficulties wellnigh insurmountable.

As might easily have been foreseen, the council was of opinion that resistance was impossible. Negotiations with Castaños were therefore renewed, through the medium of General Chabert, of General Marescat, who happened to be with Dupont's army without belonging to it, and of the Emperor's equerry, Villoutreys, who had already negotiated the armistice. Castaños was on the point of consenting to the return of our troops to Madrid, when by an unlucky accident a despatch fell into his hands, in which Savary, more and more convinced of the necessity of concentrating the army round the capital, distinctly desired Dupont to march thither. Castaños at once insisted on his first conditions, and demanded that

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the two French divisions should surrender at discretion. At the request of our negotiators, however, he consented to allow Dupont to return by sea, provided the Vedel and Dufour divisions were included in the capitulation. Our negotiators had the weakness to accept this condition, in the chimerical hope of saving the two divisions then in danger, by the sacrifice of the two others that were still free. In consequence they drew up a capitulation by virtue of which Dupont's entire corps, after having laid down their arms were to move on towards the sea by San Lucar and Rota, in order to embark and be transported to France. Article 11 carefully stipulated the preservation of the baggage belonging to the superior officers, '*which should not be subjected to any examination*'; and article 15 stipulated that the generals 'should take the measures necessary to *find out and restore the sacred vessels which might have been carried off in different encounters, and particularly at the taking of Cordova.*'

When this document, containing these dishonourable stipulations, was brought to Dupont, on the morning of July 21, Vedel had been several hours gone, leaving in front of the enemy's outposts only a few troops as a blind. This general was at that moment out of reach with his two divisions, and the capitulation, which by an untenable fiction had constituted him prisoner whilst yet free, was not signed. Dupont's duty was clear and inexorable; he ought not to have ratified it at any price. The Spaniards, enraged at seeing that Vedel had escaped them, threatened Dupont that they would put his army to the sword. He ought to have run the risk and thrown on them the responsibility of an unjustifiable crime. But he yielded to their threats and sent Vedel an order to retrace his steps. He might at least have verbally advised him to disobey it, through the medium of the officer who conveyed the order, but he did not. Vedel, who was then at St. Helena, yielding against his will, in accordance with the apparently unanimous advice of his officers, led his troops back to Baylen, where they shared the sad fate of Dupont's corps, and upwards of twenty thousand of that great

and proud army fell by one stroke into the power of the enemy whom they most despised.[1]

The capitulation was violated almost as soon as concluded. The Junta of Seville refused to ratify it, and Dupont's troops, exposed to frightful treatment, remained prisoners of war until 1814, with the exception of the superior officers who were sent back to France. Dupont having complained with bitterness of this want of faith, the Governor of Andalusia, Thomas de Morla, answered him by insulting recriminations. On the 10th of August he wrote to him: 'Your Excellency constrains me to express truths which must be bitter to you. What right have you to demand the execution of a treaty concluded in favour of an army which entered Spain under the veil of alliance and of friendship; which has imprisoned our king and his family, sacked his palaces, assassinated and robbed his subjects, laid waste his country and usurped his crown? If your Excellency does not wish still further to draw upon yourself the just indignation of the people, whom I am labouring to appease, you must endeavour by your conduct to diminish the impression of the horrors you committed at Cordova. . . . . How it stimulates the populace to know that one of your soldiers alone carried off two thousand one hundred and eighty French livres!'

There was little to answer to these recriminations, unless that the crimes of one do not justify those of others. Thus was lost in one day the whole of this army of Andalusia, exactly as though it had been swallowed up by some convulsion of nature. The incidents which brought about its ruin had been so varied, and at the same time so complicated, that each chief might with apparent reason shift the responsibility from his own shoulders, without observing that the determining force of the catastrophe altogether lay in that blind will which imposed upon them the law of defending themselves in an

[1] According to the report of Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely *on the capitulation of Baylen*, Dupont's corps numbered before the battle of Baylen, 22,830 men, *present under arms*, and its effective strength was 27,067.

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untenable position. They had all committed errors, and some of them faults, but they were placed in a situation where it was impossible not to commit them, and if they had sinned it was often through excessive zeal. Dupont had done wrong in remaining at Andujar against his convictions. Charged with the responsibility of the chief command, he ought to have disobeyed as Moncey had done, and have retreated either to La Carolina, or if he could not there feed his army, then he should have even crossed the Sierra-Morena; he had done wrong in not sacrificing at least a portion of his baggage, done wrong in not fighting with all his united forces. Finally, in the negotiations, he was guilty of a deplorable act of weakness in allowing the Vedel and Dufour divisions to be included in the capitulation. Vedel in marching to Andujar with his entire division, when he was only asked for a brigade, and in losing precious time on his return from La Carolina to Baylen, had been scarcely less reprehensible. Dufour in short, by neglecting to make a reconnaissance at Mengibar before going in search of Reding at La Carolina, had committed a fatal mistake;[1] but the great culprit was the man who had thrown them into this inextricable difficulty by rousing the hatred of the nation against them; that infatuated captain who thought that from Bayonne, a distance of five or six days, he could direct operations which required decision on the spot, and at each moment. Napoleon alone was the true author of the disaster at Baylen by forbidding the army of Andalusia to recross the Sierra-Morena as Dupont and Savary desired. If Savary had implicitly obeyed him, Dupont's loss would have occurred even sooner than it did, for he would not have been reinforced by the Gobert division until after the 20th of July. All these generals, so harshly treated by the

[1] See on this affair of Baylen, the *Observations* of General Dupont and his *Lettre sur l'Espagne* in 1808; the *Precis des opérations en Andalusia*, by General Vedel; the *Rapport* by Regenault and the *Interrogatoires* of Dupont and Vedel, published by the latter; the *Histoires des guerres de la Peninsule*, by General Fay; *L'Etude Historique sur la capitulation de Baylen*, by St. Maurice Cabang; Toréno; Napier's *History of the Peninsular War*; Robert Southey's *History of the Peninsular War*.

fortune of war, had, after all, only been unlucky; they had fought bravely; they had seen great service, and it would be most unjust to their memories to blame them for not having held out to the last man, rather than submit to the conditions of Castaños. One man dared to reproach them for not having known how to die. But how often did not fate also call upon him to choose between death and defeat? At the Beresina, at Leipsic, Fontainebleau, and Waterloo; and how did he answer the summons?

Napoleon, nevertheless, continued his triumphant progress through the towns of the South of France, through Tarbes, Agen, Toulouse, and Bourdeaux, still persuaded, as he expressed it, that 'there was nothing further to fear in Spain.' Joseph had arrived at Madrid on the 20th of July under very different impressions. The *Moniteur* might assert in vain that his journey in Spain had been but one long ovation; that his entry to Madrid had taken place amidst '*the acclamations of an immense multitude.*'[1] His brother might in vain repeat to him in all his letters: 'Be courageous and gay, never doubt of complete success.' Joseph was not re-assured. He did not find a penny in the public coffers,[2] he said, and all around were deserting him; implacable hostility lurked in every eye. He was the first to admit that these sentiments of animosity were too well justified, and to feel honest indignation at the excesses committed by our troops against his future subjects. He had already informed his brother of the shameful depredations committed by some of our officers, who had even torn off the silver buckles from the court harness for their own use;[3] before long he denounced to him another and more scandalous traffic that was carried on in objects of religious worship stolen from the churches and convents that had been given up to pillage. On July the 22nd he wrote thus to Napoleon: 'If your Majesty would write to General Caulaincourt that you are aware of the pillage that is coolly carried on in the churches

[1] *Moniteur*, July 25 and August 6, 1808.
[2] Joseph to Napoleon, July 21, 1808.
[3] Joseph to Napoleon, July 16, 1808.

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and houses of Cuença, you would do much good. *I know that the traffic in sacred vessels, which takes place at Madrid, has done a great deal of harm here.*' Two days later, on July 22, he again dwelt upon this point, and upon the difficulties of his situation; he denounced the generals who had imitated Caulaincourt, and implored his brother *to recall the robbers.*[1] He justly compared the Spanish movement to that of the French revolution. 'If France,' he said, 'had been able to place a million of men under arms, why should not Spain arm five hundred thousand? My enemies here are a nation of brave inhabitants, exasperated to the last degree. They speak publicly of my assassination. . . . The people have not had the consideration shown to them which they ought to have had.' Then recurring to an allegation of the Emperor's he writes: 'No! sire! the honest men are not on my side any more than the rogues. You are mistaken; *your glory will suffer shipwreck in Spain!*'

These representations, these lamentations, this prophetic terror so deeply felt by Joseph, produced no other effect on Napoleon than that of irritation; they seemed to him but the faint-heartedness of a timid nature, and of an imagination too strongly impressed. He endeavoured, after his own fashion, to rouse Joseph's dejected mind. No matter what might happen, the submission of Spain was an acknowledged fact. It was already recognised by Europe. 'I this morning received news from Russia and letters from the Emperor. *The affair of Spain was quite an old affair there already, and was all settled!*' The affair of Spain settled in Russia! It would have been better for us if it had been settled at Madrid. Napoleon truly had notified to Alexander, in a letter dated July 8, the changes which he had just effected in Spain: '*Obliged*,' he said, '*to interfere in Spanish affairs*, he had, by the *irresistible course of events*, been led on to a system which, *while ensuring the happiness of Spain*, ensured the tranquillity of the Empire. In this new situation, Spain *ought to be more independent of Napoleon than she ever had been.*'[2] To these very candid explanations he added, with the

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, July 24, 1808.

[2] Napoleon to Alexander, July 8, 1808.

object of discrediting the Spanish insurrection, an assertion which has been the starting-point of all the inventions that have been accumulated on this subject. 'I have reason,' he wrote to Alexander, 'to be well satisfied with persons of rank, of education, and of fortune. *The monks alone*, foreseeing the destruction of abuses, and the *agents of the Inquisition*, who discern the end of their existence, are *fomenting agitation in the country*.'

Joseph's letters and Napoleon's own correspondence afford the most glaring refutation of this unblushing falsehood. Next to the courtiers and high functionaries, the clergy formed the class that seemed most disposed to join Joseph. They were drawn on into the national movement, but they did not create it. On different occasions Joseph, and Napoleon himself, praised the conciliatory sentiments evinced by the clergy. A few days after his letter to Alexander, on the 25th of July, Napoleon wrote thus: 'Bessières' officer says, *that the priests and even the monks earnestly desire tranquillity*.' Joseph's testimony is still more decisive. On July 26 he writes to his brother: 'I assembled all the heads of the regular and secular clergy, and have spoken to them for an hour. They seem to me to have gone away very well disposed.' The next day, July 27, while analysing the sentiments of the population in general, he reverts to the same subject: '*The grandees, and the rich*, but the women especially, *are detestable*,' he says. So much for those 'persons of rank, education and fortune,' who Napoleon represented as *very satisfactory*. As to the clergy, this is what Joseph says of them: 'The clergy whom I saw yesterday, *have behaved well to-day*. I am informed that *many priests have infused good feeling amongst the people*.'[1]

Napoleon did not answer Joseph's lamentations and sinister forebodings until July 31. 'Brother!' he then writes to him; 'the style of your letter of the 24th does not please me. There is no question of dying, but of living and being victorious, *which you are, and you will be. I shall find the columns of Hercules in Spain, but not the limit of my power*.' He then enumerates the succours he was despatching to Spain, and as

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, July 27, 1808.

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to Joseph's complaints regarding the pillaging and the robbers, he says: 'Caulaincourt *did quite right at Cuença; the town was given up to pillage; that is the right of war, as it was taken by assault.* . . . Your position may be painful as king, *but it is brilliant as general.*'

On the day following that upon which he wrote these insolent and cruel words, which set at defiance every principle of justice, of good sense, of humanity, and even of fortune, he received the news that Dupont, far from taking the offensive, was about to make a retrograde movement. 'Dupont is about to be attacked, and obliged to beat a retreat. It is inconceivable!' (Aug. 1). Truly it was incomprehensible, with the mad illusions which he had persisted in maintaining to the last, in spite of the warnings of his servants, in spite of his brother's notes of alarm, in spite of the very evidence of the events themselves. He did not hear the sad truth until August 2. His heart of bronze was untouched even for a moment by the misfortunes of his companions in arms; his pride alone felt the blow. He found it impossible not to foresee its chief results. His prestige destroyed, Spain lost for a long time, perhaps for ever, hopes revived amongst his numerous enemies!—but instead of blaming his own blindness, he thought only of persecuting, disgracing, and striking the victims of his own want of foresight. In ruining Dupont he evinced the same rage that he had displayed towards Villeneuve. 'Read these documents,' he wrote to Clarke on August 3, 'and you will see that from the beginning of the world there never was anything so stupid, so silly, so cowardly. This justifies the Macks, the Hohenlohes, &c. I wish to know what tribunals are to try these generals, and what punishments the laws inflict on such a crime.' 'These cowards,' he wrote on another day, 'shall carry their heads to the scaffold.' There was a great deal of affectation, however, in this anger, and sometimes he acted the part rather awkwardly, as may be seen by the burlesque phrase which he addressed to Davoust:—'Dupont has dishonoured our arms, he has shown as much incapacity as cowardice; when you hear it some day, *your hair will stand on end.*' (August 23.)

The disaster of Baylen necessitated the evacuation of Madrid, now uncovered on its southern side. Joseph was the first, on the 29th of July, hurriedly to quit that capital, which he had entered only eight days before. On the previous evening two thousand servants deserted the palace at the same moment, as if it were a plague-stricken spot.[1] The courtiers behaved like the servants; not one of them accompanying Joseph in his flight. The French army then retreated to the Ebro, its chiefs not considering the line of the Douro sufficiently strong, although Napoleon recommended it in the interests of the army in Portugal, which was then threatened equally with that in Spain. Verdier was obliged to raise the siege of Saragossa, after a fresh assault that proved as disastrous and as fruitless as all those that had preceded it. Joseph moved his headquarters to Miranda, where Marshal Jourdan, whom he had long since asked Napoleon to send, soon came to join him, and our army remained on the Ebro extending its cantonments from Bilbao to Tudela in a strong defensive position that allowed it to wait for reinforcements and for the promised presence of the Emperor.

The month of August had not ended before a fresh check, almost as disastrous as that of Baylen, again tarnished the glory of the French arms. For upwards of a month there had been no news from the army in Portugal. This silence was not due solely to the Spanish insurrection, which had interrupted all communication between France and Lisbon, but was likewise caused by the revolt of the Portuguese population. Junot occupied but four or five strong positions in Portugal, when on the 1st of August, there hove in sight at the mouth of the Mondejo the fleet conveying the English army. It was commanded by a young general who had already distinguished himself in India by the firmness and wisdom of his military conduct, Sir Arthur Wellesley, so well known later by the name of Wellington. Sent for the purpose of supporting the Spanish insurrection, Wellesley had first appeared before Corunna, but the insurgents of Gallicia, like those of Andalusia, refused, even after their defeat at Rio Seco, all foreign

[1] Joseph to Napoleon, August 14.

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aid. They would accept no help from England, except in money and ammunition. Wellesley, in consequence, selected as the theatre of his operations that narrow and rugged sea-coast of Portugal which he was ere long to convert into an impregnable entrenched camp, against which all Napoleon's power was doomed to prove ineffectual.

Having disembarked with 10,000 men, and being reinforced a few days afterwards by 4,000 more, Wellesley hastened to take the offensive before the arrival of Sir Hew Dalrymple, who was to become Commander-in-Chief of the army when it should attain its full strength. Junot well understood the danger he would incur if he allowed the English to attack him in a town like Lisbon, containing three hundred thousand inhabitants all ready to revolt. He formed the very wise plan of advancing to meet the enemy, and of driving him back on the sea, before the arrival of his reinforcements. To carry out such a design, however, his whole combined forces would have been required. They still amounted to 29,000 men; but Junot was unable to effect their concentration in time. Nevertheless he persisted in retaining the greater number of the positions he still occupied. True, he recalled Kellerman from Sétubal, but he left garrisons in Elvas, Santarem, Almeida, Peniche, and Palmela, besides the one at Lisbon. Moreover, he exposed a detachment of five thousand men to the utmost peril under General Delaborde, whom he had ordered to watch the English. Attacked by Wellesley near Roliça, in a position which was far too advanced considering the number of his troops, Delaborde sustained the shock of an army three times more numerous than his own, and defended his ground inch by inch in the most intrepid manner. None the less, however, was he obliged to retreat hurriedly, after a loss of five hundred men; and the campaign was opened by a check, which at all times is so discouraging to soldiers. (August 15.)[1]

Immediately after this combat Wellesley advanced to Vimiero,

[1] Fay, *Histoire des Guerres de la Peninsule*, Tome iv. Wellington's despatch to Lord Castlereagh, August 17, 1808. (Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, vol. iv.)

where he was joined by two new brigades, adding about 18,000 men to his forces. Junot had at length succeeded in collecting his principal corps; and his troops amounted to rather more than 13,000 men.[1] He had advanced on his side as far as Torres Vedras, facing the English positions. The moment had come for him to 'drive the English into the sea,' according to the programme so often traced out by Napoleon; they seemed to wish to render this task more easy to him by having encamped on the heights of Vimiero, backed by precipices that overhang the Atlantic. Wellesley had not chosen this position. His plan—a far better one—was to march straight along the sea-coast, so as to turn Junot's army by placing himself between it and Lisbon, in the neighbourhood of Mafra. But an order from his superior officer Sir Harry Burrard, second in command under General Dalrymple, who was just about to land, obliged him to wait at Vimiero for the arrival of another corps of 10,000 men, expected under General Moore. Happily for him the same reason urged Junot to attack him at once.

At early dawn on August 21, Junot commenced his movements, and towards seven o'clock on that morning attacked Wellesley's positions. General Delaborde, supported by Generals Loison and Thomière, rushed impetuously to the right of the English army, up the heights of Vimiero, which seemed to be comparatively bare of troops. The English had hardly any cavalry, but their infantry was solid and staunch. The well-directed fire of their numberless batteries made the assailants stop short, and soon threw them back in disorder down the slopes they had ascended. Our attack against their left being secondary, for that very reason was only feebly supported. It had been, in consequence, less successful, and the two generals who led it were disabled. Junot then brought forward his reserve, composed of choice troops and commanded by Kellerman, with the artillery under General Fay in support. Kel-

[1] It is clearly impossible to follow French reports on this point, as they lower this figure to 9000, for reasons easy to guess. Wellington's report says, that Junot had 'collected all his forces,' which is equally erroneous. Lord Londonderry is the historian who most nearly approaches the truth. (*Story of the Peninsular War.*)

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lerman's grenadiers cleared the slopes at a run, and soon crowned the heights of Vimiero; but there they were received by a heavy fire that made them recoil; our artillery was dismounted before it could take up a position, and its colonel severely wounded; and finally our cavalry, rendered useless by the hilly nature of the ground, could afford no assistance beyond that of protecting the retreat of our battalions, as they were each in turn repulsed. Our attack failed on every point, and the English remained untouched in their position.

It was by that time mid-day, and we had lost 1800 men and thirty guns. The English had only 134 killed and 335 wounded.[1] Junot ordered the retreat, which the army effected without hindrance. Wellesley wished to pursue us, but he was no longer commander-in-chief, and Burrard, who had assumed the command immediately after the battle, did not allow him to follow up his victory. The absence of cavalry would doubtless have rendered pursuit difficult. On the following day, after having held a council of war, at which the impossibility of continuing the occupation of Portugal was admitted, Junot sent General Kellerman to the English camp to arrange its evacuation by the French. This decision was rendered the more necessary by the arrival of the expected English reinforcements. At length, after an armistice, and after long debates, which lasted for nearly ten days, the plenipotentiaries, on the 30th August, signed the convention of Cintra. The Russian squadron, which was blockaded in the port of Lisbon, and had frequently refused to second Junot, was also anxious to share in the convention, and its admiral, Siniavine, succeeded in obtaining permission to remain in an English port as a *deposit*, until the conclusion of peace between the respective governments.

The convention of Cintra granted Junot's army the most unhoped-for conditions. Since the landing of Moore, it had, in fact, become possible to make him prisoner, if not to destroy him altogether. Defeated, disheartened, hemmed in by the Spanish and Portuguese insurrections, as well as by 30,000 first-rate

[1] Wellington's report to Burrard, August 21, 1808. (Despatches.)

troops, he would have found it difficult to escape the alternative of seeking death on a field of battle, or of being made prisoner of war. Such indeed was Sir Arthur Wellesley's opinion, who grieved to see the army lose the fruit of its two victories.[1] But Junot's proud bearing, and the prestige of Napoleon's arms, which was still so powerful, had their influence upon Dalrymple and Burrard. They granted Junot a kind of capitulation, according to the terms of which the French army was to evacuate the whole of Portugal, but to retain their arms and baggage, without being made prisoners of war, the English government undertaking to convey them by sea to L'Orient and Rochefort. The convention of Cintra excited as deep discontent in England as it did in Portugal and Spain. Nevertheless it was carried out with the most perfect faith in the course of the month of September, and the British Cabinet contented itself with sending the three generals who were condemned by public opinion before a commission, which ended by acquitting them.[2]

At the same moment that Junot's troops were embarking for France, downcast by their prompt defeat, and uncertain what reception awaited them, an army was embarking for Spain, from the other extremity of Europe, animated by very different sentiments. Having survived a thousand dangers and now escaping in an almost miraculous manner, it was on its road to join the defenders of Spain, to conquer or to die with them. It was the army of Romana which Napoleon had treacherously drawn off to the shores of the Baltic, in order to diminish in so far the forces of the country which he wished to subdue. He had sent it first to Hamburg, but not considering it sufficiently far off from Spain even there, he had landed the greater portion

[1] He gives his opinion thus in a letter to Lord Castlereagh, 'Ten days after the battle of the 21st we have not advanced farther, we are not even so far advanced as we could and ought to have been on the evening of the battle.' (Despatches.)

[2] They alleged in their justification the real difficulty of forcing conditions upon Junot, without cavalry, and also the advantage of an immediate evacuation of Portugal. (Reports of the Board of Inquiry, Ann. Reg. 1808.)

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of it on the island of Funen, belonging to Denmark, and where it was shut in between Bernadotte's army and the sea. But the ingenious precautions which might be expected to have rapidly killed soldiers unaccustomed to live in those frozen regions, brought about the discomfiture of the Tyrant; for it was precisely the sea which enabled Romana to effect his escape. Having established communications with the commander of an English cruiser, he took possession of Nyborg and of Langeland, and on the 15th August set sail with 10,000 men; the other 8,000 which composed his corps d'armée having failed to embark in time. This it was which Napoleon and his apologists have called '*the treason of Romana*'!

In one month, from the 15th July to the 20th August, Napoleon had experienced more checks than he had ever sustained during his whole career. Repulsed before Valencia and before Saragossa, crushed rather than beaten at Baylen and Vimiero, driven out of the whole Peninsula, as far as the Ebro, he had beheld his arms disgraced in a country which had no organization and no army, by a people whose military forces he utterly despised, and whose whole territory he already occupied. That nation which he had completely enchained as it were by surprise, had made a single movement, and all had crumbled at one blow. The stroke even reached the heart of the Empire; what was it in fact but a long series of surprises? This defeat, which ought to have been so painful to his pride, has been called an expiation.

Let us learn to think and to speak like men and not to mix adulation even with blame. Every idea of justice is profaned by those who say that Napoleon was punished because he signally failed in one of the most wicked enterprises which a crowned villain ever endeavoured to carry out. No! the shedding of so much innocent blood, so many families sacrificed, so many mothers reduced to despair, so many inoffensive men driven for years to murder without scruple, so many crimes conceived, committed, and persisted in with such cool premeditation, are not so easily expiated; and

the lengthened inactivity of St. Helena was in itself nothing but an insignificant punishment when compared with the enormity of the crime. Let us not name punishment when speaking of this man, or if we do, let us place him boldly in a rank superior to the rest of mankind, and in that case we shall only be doing justice to ourselves by thinking that we are beings of an inferior nature, made to be for ever the prey and the playthings of a few privileged monsters.

CHAPTER X.

EUROPE AFTER BAYLEN. THE INTERVIEW AT ERFURT.

(August—October, 1808.)

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THE news of the capitulations of Baylen and of Cintra produced an indescribable sensation throughout the whole of Europe. To understand this aright, it is necessary to recollect the state of deep depression and discouragement into which so long a series of deceptions and successive defeats had plunged all those whose hopes of deliverance rested on the political and military combinations of different governments. Napoleon's star, obscured for a moment at Eylau, had reappeared brighter than ever, so that the most persevering had grown weary, and looked upon the struggle as ended. His colossal power, with its hand henceforth weighing heavily on the only kingdom which might have presented an obstacle to it, seemed to possess the properties of the inflexible laws of nature and history. The hopeless times of the Roman Empire were evidently returning: men could not but live, yet to do so they must resign themselves to being stifled, and renounce all idea of fighting against the force of circumstances.

In one day this dismal nightmare had vanished, and hope revived. The great lesson which Spain had just given to the world was the more striking from its being precisely the one of which Europe stood most in need. Here it was not the government but the nation which had done everything. Elsewhere all were disheartened and dejected, because cabinets had miserably failed in their efforts. But the Spanish revolution said to the people, 'Your salvation is in your own hands'; to

individuals it said, 'Rely upon yourselves alone and you will conquer'; and in support of its words it appealed to its works. What the coalition of all the European governments had been unable to effect during eight years of war, the Spanish revolution had accomplished in one campaign with a handful of insurgents. It had twice inflicted on those redoubted eagles the most bloody humiliation to which a French army had ever been subjected. The material results of this victory were great enough, for the invasion had by one blow been driven back to the foot of the Pyrenees; but its moral effect was incalculable.

The lesson needed no commentary. It shone like lightning amidst darkness, and all eyes saw it at the same moment. The charm was for ever broken; the weak point of the colossus was discovered; the conqueror of kings was not as yet the conqueror of the people; the side which had so often lost when playing against him might now recommence the game with hope of success. England resolved upon a close alliance with Spain. She brought subsidies, arms, and immense munitions of war to the insurgents. With unusual activity she pressed forward the organization and embarkation of her troops, which are always so slow to move. She showed that she was determined to defend the soil of the Peninsula as if it were her own territory.

In Germany the rebound of the events in Spain caused throughout the land a kind of electric shock, which gave birth to what had never before existed, namely, the *German Nation*. The great intellectual renaissance of Germany during the eighteenth century had, it is true, prepared the way by forming the moral individuality of the people, but it was amidst the throes of defeat and foreign occupation that this glorious birth took place, and that the word German country was pronounced for the first time in the world. All the old antagonism, all the superannuated feuds between Northern and Southern Germany, between the larger and smaller states, between the princes and the higher ranks of the ancient aristocracy, between the noble and the citizen, between the House of Austria and the House of Brandenburg, disappeared instantaneously to make

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way for one single sentiment—hatred of the French yoke. The initiative belonged to no class in particular, it was universal and simultaneous. It was a professor of philosophy, Moritz Arndt, who founded the *Tugendbund*, that *association of virtue* in which artisans and mighty nobles, soldiers and citizens alike enrolled themselves. Experience had proved that the habits and the nature of the country were eminently unfavourable to party warfare. Even the intrepid Major Schill had been obliged to admit this truth after his unfortunate, though heroic, efforts to organize an insurrection in Prussia during the campaign in Poland. The French occupation, moreover, owing to the Confederation of the Rhine and the enormous number of our troops, was far more deeply rooted in Germany than in the Peninsula. That great national insurrection, therefore, was obliged to act in an underhand manner, and to disguise itself under the form of secret societies.

The organization of the *Tugendbund* very much resembled that adopted later by the *Carbonari*. A central committee, at a distance and beyond the reach of the Imperial Police, directed the affairs of the association, which then branched off into a multiplicity of private committees. The provincial committees had no intercommunication, so that the discovery of one in no degree endangered the safety of the others. The association was thus gradually propagated even in the provinces of the Confederation of the Rhine, and it silently prepared its forces, awaiting the hour of a national rising. The highest as well as the lowest were proud of being affiliated to it. Hardenburg and Scharnhorst, formerly ministers, Generals Blücher and Gneisenau, the Duke of Brunswick-Œls, Major Schill, Doctor Jahn, were its most active members. Before long the soil of ancient Germany was covered with similar associations, grafted on to this head institution. The governments being forced, as all private individuals were, to dissimulate, and to make use of none but secret and evasive measures, thoroughly seconded this vast conspiracy. It was served by two ministers whose firmness of character was only equalled by their superior intellect; in Prussia by the Baron von Stein, in Austria by Count Stadion.

Baron von Stein seems to have been the first amongst his countrymen who saw that nothing could save Germany but a great national rising. At all events, no one will deprive him of the honour of having promoted it in the boldest, the most persevering, and the most skilful manner. This great minister was even more, a great citizen. He felt that in order effectively to stir up the popular masses, which hitherto had been denied all share in the great interests of the country, it was necessary to bring them into public life. He felt that patriots cannot be made out of men bound down to the soil, and that this unique occasion must be made use of, in order to impose upon the nobility the sacrifice of their chief privileges. He desired, therefore, that the prelude to the war of independence should be the emancipation of the lower orders in Prussia. With free men alone would he conquer Napoleon's despotism. He effaced the last vestiges of serfdom from the Prussian legislation, and turned the peasant into a citizen. He abolished feudal service, authorized the large proprietors to divide their estates, gave the *communes* the right of self-administration by allowing them to choose their own municipal councils, and in this way transformed them into so many small centres full of life, activity, and civic emulation. He granted the middle class the right of acquiring landed property, which had hitherto been the exclusive privilege of the nobles, and threw open the industrial and commercial professions to the latter, although this tolerance, it must be added, was hateful to them, as being a sign of equality. Such was the object of the three Memel decrees, dated in the months of October and November, 1807, and owing to which Prussia had become a nation. And all these reforms, which were equivalent to a revolution, were effected by him without either noise, or show, or any of those popular rewards so dear to vulgar tribunes.

At the same time that he boldly abolished these old abuses, Stein obstinately resisted our exactions in the assessment of war contributions; a matter the settlement of which Napoleon purposely delayed in order to have a pretext for continuing the occupation of the Prussian territory. He organized

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a silent and passive resistance against the French administration in Prussia, which vanished when it was complained of, but which, making itself felt always and everywhere, paralysed all our measures. The management of this singular conspiracy was all the more easy from the administrators themselves being its instruments; for Napoleon, when confiding the administration of Prussia to his representative Daru, had been obliged to retain the greater number of the old Prussian officials. Daru's orders were never disputed, but they were not carried out, or they were carried out in a contrary sense, on the pretence of having been misunderstood. Hence arose incessant squabbles, ever-recurring difficulties, which deeply irritated the Prussian population, already exasperated by the crushing burdens that had been imposed upon them.[1]

Nor did von Stein's sphere of action confine itself to Prussia. He successfully strove to extend it over the whole of Germany, and especially over those provinces which were allied to the French Empire: 'The exasperation in Germany increases daily,' he wrote, on the 15th of August, 1808, to Prince Sagn Wittgenstein, then at the baths in Mecklenburg. 'It must be encouraged and stimulated. I should much like to have correspondents established in Hesse and Westphalia, that they should make preparation there for certain events, and seek to establish intercourse there with men of energy and good will. . . . *The affairs of Spain are making a profound impression. They prove what ought long since to have been foreseen.* It would be very useful to spread the news in a prudent manner.' This significant letter was seized at Spandau on M. de Koppe, and instantly transmitted to Napoleon by Marshal Soult. Although it lifted only one corner of the veil, it said enough to enlighten the Emperor on the gravity of the events that were being prepared in Germany. But, inflated with pride and completely absorbed in his designs of revenging himself on Spain by the infliction of exemplary punishment, he regarded Stein's letter only as a motive for peremptorily cutting short the objections

[1] *Mémoires tirés des papiers d'un homme d'état.* (Hardenburg.) Schoell: *Histoire abr. des Traités.*

of Prussia to his pecuniary demands, and forcing King Frederic William to dismiss his minister. Obliged to make a retrograde step for the purpose of concentrating all his forces against Spain, he took advantage of this incident to effect this retreat in the most favourable manner possible. He made use of the letter, therefore, but despised the warning it contained. He had it printed in the *Moniteur*[1] with these few words of comment: 'The King of Prussia may be pitied for having ministers *who are as unskilful as they are perverse.*' This short sentence was the death-warrant of Stein's administration. The great patriot retired, that he might not implicate his country; but his plans and his reforms none the less constituted the life and soul of the Prussian government, and therein lay the danger. 'I have demanded,' wrote Napoleon to Soult, on September 10, 'that Stein be expelled from the ministry; otherwise the King of Prussia shall not re-enter possession of his states. I have placed his property in Westphalia under sequestration.'

Like every other satisfaction which he demanded at this critical moment, this was also granted to him; but the very facility with which he obtained it, ought to have shown him that other means were relied upon, secret it might be, but certain, whereby revenge could be taken later. Prince William of Prussia had been in Paris during several months past for the definitive settlement of the Prussian debt. Champagny signified to him in Napoleon's name, that he must at once accept the sum of one hundred and forty millions fixed by the Emperor. The Prince was obliged at the same time to submit to the hard conditions imposed upon his King. The convention, fixing the amount of the debt, stipulated that ten thousand French troops should continue to occupy the fortresses of Glogau, Stettin, and Cüstrin until it were fully paid off; that they should be maintained, if not paid, by the King of Prussia; that the Prussian army should be reduced to *forty-two thousand men* for ten years, the King not being allowed under any circumstances to make good its deficiency by raising the militia (Separate Articles, I and III). Lastly, King Frederic William bound

[1] *Moniteur* of September 8, 1808.

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himself, in case of war against Austria, to place a division of sixteen thousand men at Napoleon's disposal.[1]

Such were the first-fruits of Stein's policy. But his defeat was more apparent than real, as a main feature of his plans was to push everything to extremes, and he relied more upon the despair which an excess of evil would produce, than upon the petty ingenuity of the policy of cabinets. So cruel an abuse of force could only serve his purposes in the end, for, in the intolerable position thus created for them, the monarchy and the Prussian people could, henceforth, only live in a permanent state of conspiracy. They had been obliged to submit to the treaty, but they evaded it. The Minister of War, Scharnhorst, carried out all the reforms in the military departments, which his friend Stein had introduced into the civil order. He admitted the middle classes to superior grades in the army; and, whilst ostensibly maintaining it at the figure of 42,000 men, had in reality 200,000, thanks to a kind of rapid rotation by which soldiers remained in a regiment only just long enough to receive instruction.

In Austria, Count Stadion, obliged to treat an all-powerful aristocracy and an influential clergy with respect, was unable to undertake great popular reforms. Moreover, he had no strong and serious minded population to lean upon, like that of Northern Germany. But, if he had to adopt less radical measures, he worked with no less energy in furtherance of the common cause. The Austrian army had been thoroughly reorganized by the Archduke Charles, who was constantly exercising it. The active army of 300,000 men had lately received the addition of a reserve numbering nearly 100,000. Nay more: Stadion had decreed throughout the whole extent of the empire the establishment of a national militia, and almost the entire able-bodied population had come forward to enrol themselves in it with extraordinary enthusiasm and without distinction of class. Free gifts flowed into the public treasury. In short, for the first time a patriotic movement was produced in that artificial empire,

[1] Convention of September 8, 1808. De Clercq, *Recueil des traités.*

which has never been a country. Austria becoming a nation through hatred and fear of foreign domination, Austria appealing to public opinion through the eloquent pen of Gentz, Austria become the champion of the right of nations and of European liberty—such a phenomenon in itself condemned Napoleon's policy. It told how inverted the *rôles* had become in Europe since the great days of the French Revolution, and how far removed was the pretended heir of the men of '89 from the principles which had inspired them!

The armaments of Austria could not fail to attract the attention of the Emperor of the French; for, whilst arrogating to himself the right of having 800,000 men under arms, Napoleon was by no means inclined to tolerate anything of the kind on the part of a foreign power. On the 16th July Champagny, taking advantage of some pretended violence to French subjects, questioned Prince Metternich as to the intentions of his government. A few days later he renewed his questions as to the armaments in a tone of extreme bitterness. 'What does your government mean? Why should it disturb the peace of the continent? Your princes traverse your provinces; they call the people to the defence of the country. The whole population from eighteen to forty-five has been placed under arms. . . . . Your people are frightened, your neighbours alarmed. Every one is asking, "What does Austria mean? What danger threatens her? . . . ." &c.'[1] Metternich's reply, dated July 22, 1808, was clear and unanswerable. All the states, neighbours of Austria, Italy, Bavaria, Westphalia, and even the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, had changed their military systems and adopted the French conscription. Austria could not remain behindhand without compromising the safety of her people; she therefore imitated her neighbours by effecting a transformation analogous to that which they had accomplished. Her reserve and her national guard were institutions she had only borrowed from France, in order to place herself on a footing of equality with the other states of Europe. What

[1] Documents communicated to the Senate in the sitting of April 14, 1809. No. III. *Arch. parl.*

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were called her armaments had no other meaning.[1] To this embarrassing reply Champagny answered by touching on different matters discussed at Teplitz and Carlsbad. He asserted that two couriers had been arrested on their way to Dalmatia; an arrest which afterwards was to be transformed into an *assassination* in Napoleon's manifestoes; then, finally, he offered to raise the camps in Silesia,—a measure which the French government had decided upon *in any case*, in consequence of the events in Spain. But he did not offer the only measure which would have been conclusive, namely, the reduction of the French and allied armies, in proportion to the reduction he wished to obtain from Austria.[2] Henceforth Napoleon's exactions could alone be regarded as acts of diplomatic violence.

That, however, was the precise character he wished to give them. He quickly understood, that, from the point of view of international law, he could not force Austria out of the purely defensive position she had chosen. Determined, at the same time, to drive her out of it by war, yet not wishing to undertake that war until he had subdued Spain, he resolved to gain time by menaces and intimidation; both of which means were efficacious enough against a power whose preparations were still far from complete. No sooner had he returned to Paris from his journey through the south and west of France (August 14, 1808) than Napoleon took up the dialogue with Metternich at the point where Champagny had left it off. On the 15th August, in the midst of a solemn audience given to the great bodies of the State, and to the members of the diplomatic corps, the Emperor personally apostrophised the Austrian ambassador. In presence of the astonished assembly he indulged in one of those violent outbursts that had become so celebrated since his interview with Lord Whitworth. He took advantage of the reserve which his position imposed on the ambassador, in order to assail him at his ease with undignified invectives and with questions which he allowed him no time to answer:

[1] Documents communicated to the Senate in the sitting of April 14, 1809. No. V.

[2] Ibid. Champagny to Metternich, July 30, 1808.

'Does Austria then wish to make war upon us, or does she want to frighten us? . . . . Who is attacking you, that you should thus think of defending yourself? . . . . Is not everything around you peaceful? Since the peace of Presburg, has there been the slightest difference between you and me? You are calling the people to the defence of the country; you are increasing your regiments to 1300 men. You have 14,000 artillery horses, you are arming your fortresses, and yet your exchange which was already so low has fallen still lower! Do not say that you are obliged to provide for your safety, you know I ask nothing from you. I have encamped my troops in order to let them draw breath; they are encamped not in France, but in foreign countries, *because it is less expensive.* But if you arm, I will arm. I will raise 200,000 men if necessary. You will find no continental power to join you. The Emperor of Russia himself will request you to remain quiet. Your Emperor can have no ill feeling against me. I occupied his capital, and the greater part of his provinces, but all was given back to him. I even kept Venice only to leave fewer subjects of discord. But war will take place whether you or I like it. Your people are roused, and have committed acts of violence, because they place more faith in your measures than in your proclamations in favour of peace. *Hence the assassination of three of my couriers on their way to Dalmatia.* A few more such insults and war will become inevitable, *for they may kill us, but they shall not insult us with impunity.* . . . . You say that you have an army of 400,000 men. You wish to double it. To follow your example *it will soon be necessary to arm even the women!* In such a state of things war will become desirable in order to bring about a solution. An evil, severe but short, is far better than prolonged suffering.'[1]

Such in brief was this incoherent and undignified sally, according to Champagny's report to General Andréossy, in which all its more violent expressions were carefully omitted. It left out, on one side, all the real difficulties of the situation of the two countries; it evaded all serious discussion

[1] Champagny to Andréossy, August 16, 1808.

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on the part of Metternich; it was full of compromising avowals, of false and wounding allegations; but above all it possessed in the highest degree the tone and character which Napoleon wished to give it, namely, that of a public menace. The most astounding feature of this long diatribe was, undeniably, the reproach of ingratitude addressed to the Emperor of Austria! Napoleon, in conclusion demanded that Austria should countermand her armaments and recognise Joseph as King of Spain. Finding it impossible to take up the gauntlet at once, the cabinet of Vienna temporised and made vague promises, yet never for an instant suspended its preparations, so that Napoleon succeeded but very imperfectly in his attempt at intimidation.

Nor did the Emperor succeed any better with a court which he had humbled to the last degree and which he had hitherto always subdued through fear. The Holy See, ordinarily so hostile to the most legitimate insurrections, was more alive than perhaps any other European court to the success of that in Spain. It may be said with truth that it had individually more grievances against Napoleon than all the other cabinets together. After Cardinal de Bayanne's useless mission, Napoleon had seized the Papal States, whilst disguising them under the singular titles of departments of the *Metauro*, of the *Musone*, and of the *Tronto*,—denominations which he selected purposely in order to efface old associations, and in the belief that under these names, no one would recognise the Roman States. He had then quietly taken possession of Rome (Feb. 2, 1808), where General Miollis instantly laid hands on all the public offices, and governed the Eternal City like a common *préfecture*. The Pope had protested against the occupation of his capital; but, although this protest was made with true evangelical sweetness, Napoleon's only reply was to remove the advisers who, he said, were leading His Holiness astray. He made his gensdarmes seize all the Cardinals who were not Roman subjects by birth, and, taking them out of Rome, conduct them across the frontier. He incorporated the soldiers of the Pope's army amongst his own troops, making them promise that 'they

would no longer be led by[1] priests'; an honour for which these unfortunate men had to pay dearly. These acts of violence were crowned by the occupation of the Quirinal, and Pius VII saw himself not only despoiled of all the prerogatives of royalty, but watched like a prisoner beneath his own roof. (April 7, 1808.)

Nevertheless, just as he was about to embark in the contest with Spain, Napoleon perceived, though according to his custom rather late, that he had undertaken too much at a time, and that his quarrels with the Court of Rome might seriously injure his projects against Spain. On April 18, 1808, he wrote to Prince Eugène: 'My son! I am immensely occupied; on that account I desire that the Roman affairs be postponed until the 10th May; meanwhile have the four legations governed temporarily in the manner I have ordered. One must not undertake everything at[2] once.' The adjournment thus proposed was that of the publication of the decree in which he declared that he revoked 'the donation of Charlemagne, *his illustrious predecessor*,' in regard to the provinces of Urbino, Ancona, Macerata, and Camerino. The counter-order arrived too late, for Miollis had not only published the decree, but had seized, in the very palace of the Holy Father, his Secretary of State, Gabrielli. Between the Papacy and the Empire it was henceforth to be war to the knife. An explosion might be prevented, the noise might be stifled by intimidation, silence, or mystery, but its progress could not be arrested, and it would be carried on without truce and without intermission until one of the two combatants should fall.

It is easy to imagine the impression which, in such a state of things, the news of our reverses in Spain made upon the Roman Court. It produced a most comforting effect on the Vatican. The protests of the Holy See, hitherto so timid, instantly acquired a haughty and bitter tone, at which Cardinal Pacca, who signed them in his character of successor to Gabrielli, admits in his memoirs that he was somewhat shocked. From

[1] Order of the day of General Miollis, May 27, 1808.

[2] *Mémoires* of Prince Eugène, v. 4.

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the month of August, 1808, each act of the French administration in the Roman States became a fresh occasion for the publication of vehement manifestoes, which were placarded on the walls of Rome by invisible agents. The more Napoleon sought to allay hostilities, to beguile his adversaries, and to avoid new subjects of dispute, the more Pius VII raised his voice, and endeavoured to attract the attention of Europe, still heedless and indifferent. Our reverses, it is true, were not serious enough to permit the Holy Father to have recourse to extreme measures; but he began to prepare his spiritual weapons; he kept them in good order; in the silence of his cabinet he examined and affectionately handled a bull of excommunication which long since had been ready, and which he proposed to launch against Napoleon at the first opportune moment.[1]

The general situation of the Continent, apparently without cause for alarm at the moment, might yet become most dangerous, once Napoleon were engaged with his best troops in Spain. Though unconscious of the most disquieting symptoms in the actual state of affairs, he nevertheless at once perceived the necessity of taking precautions, by lowering his pretensions, and this time especially seriously obtaining the support of Russia. He must either renounce Spain, which his pride did not permit, or else show himself to Europe with forces of such a description as would quell all desire of troubling our operations in the Peninsula. The alliance with Alexander was, at all times, the most certain method of restraining the European powers. Unfortunately, the disappointment which the Czar had experienced after the Treaty of Tilsit, had not contributed to give him confidence in Napoleon. For a certain time the latter had succeeded in occupying Alexander's imagination with fantastic plans for the partition of Turkey, and an expedition to India; but of all the possessions promised him Finland alone had been given. This acquisition, forcibly taken from the States of a relative and ally exhausted by labour in the common cause,

[1] Memoirs of Cardinal Pacca.

was not approved of in Russia, where, for a long time past nothing had been feared from the neighbourhood of Sweden. The Czar's intimacy with Napoleon had always been unpopular amongst his own subjects; since the deceptions of Tilsit, it had become hateful to them, and they spoke loudly at St. Petersburg of the possibility of having recourse to the *great Asiatic remedy*—a sovereign method already applied to Paul I and many of his predecessors.[1]

Napoleon's relations with the Court of Russia, at one time very formal, became far more amicable, according as Spanish affairs grew complicated. After the capitulation of Baylen they became positively affectionate. The Czar was too clear-sighted not to understand the meaning of this gradation. He quickly understood that the more difficulties Napoleon might create for himself in Spain, the more would he be forced to make concessions to Russia. Most characteristic it truly was, and condemnatory of this much-vaunted alliance, that our ally was obliged to calculate on our reverses! Far, then, from objecting in the slightest degree to the enterprises of his great friend, Alexander perpetually spoke of them to Caulaincourt as matters that were most natural and legitimate. Having done so much to disown the past and abandon the cause he had served, he had no alternative but to persevere in order to reap the benefit of his conduct. He therefore, with a pleasure that is easy to understand, beheld embarrassments springing up and increasing, which would render his position all the stronger. So early as the middle of March, Napoleon, anxious to calm the impatience of Russia, declared to Tolstoï that he was disposed to satisfy her on every point, to evacuate Russia, to quiet the Poles, and to settle the affairs of the East; but, that he desired first to have a fresh interview with the Czar, at which all these questions would be definitively arranged.

After the affair of Baylen these demonstrations of friendship assumed a tone of tenderness. Napoleon grew impatient to see Alexander, to press him to his heart, to efface all recollections

[1] *Correspondance diplomatique* of Comte de Maistre.

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of temporary misunderstandings. How far removed he now is from the project of keeping Silesia as an equivalent for the principalities, which he formerly considered such a natural arrangement! There can be no question of that to-day, nor of that empty scarecrow of Polish independence. The *rôles* are changed. Alexander no longer solicits, as at Tilsit; he can make his own conditions and, if need be, impose them. So completely is he master of the situation, that even Austria offers him those provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia for which Napoleon so long encouraged him to hope. The Russian alliance, which at Tilsit had only been an arrangement to flatter Napoleon's ambition, had now become a necessity to him. Each side felt this; hence the two sovereigns were equally impatient to meet again; the one to strengthen an alliance so indispensable to the success of his plans, the other to derive from it all the promised advantages. It was settled, therefore, that the desired interview should take place at Erfurt towards the end of September, 1808.

To satisfy Russian ambition, to obtain, by means of this powerful aid, a few months tranquillity in Europe, which would enable him to crush for ever the Spanish insurrection, such was the new plan to which Napoleon devoted himself with habitual activity, and in which he had every chance of succeeding, owing to the enmities he had contrived to sow amongst the chiefs of the old European coalition. Divided through his influence, as the chiefs of the confederacy of Gaul had been by Cæsar, they would have met with the same fate, had not the Spanish people, like a new actor, appeared on the scene and thrown its sword into the balance. On Spain alone did the destiny of Europe depend at this moment, and against Spain Napoleon was about to direct all his efforts. Freed from Prussia by the treaty of September 8, freed at least momentarily from Austria by the Russian alliance, he led towards the Pyrenees the principal corps of that immense army which occupied Germany. At other periods of his career he had accomplished great deeds with small means,—to-day he requires a more rapid method, one more suited to strike the imagination of mankind. It

is not a campaign of Italy that he is preparing against Spain, but an expedition in the style of Xerxes. He desires to appear there as an exterminator, armed with thunder, or a god anxious to avenge his offended majesty.

On the 5th September, 1808, his ministers, Champagny and Clarke, presented themselves in his name before the Senate. Champagny, as Minister for Foreign Affairs, communicated to this assembly the treaties concluded at Bayonne with the dispossessed princes of Spain. These famous documents of sad memory were accompanied by two equally extraordinary reports from the same minister in support of the usurpation of the Spanish throne. In the first of these, antedated the 24th April, Champagny, after having stated all the motives which imposed upon Napoleon the duty of *regenerating* Spain, and of 'recommencing the work of Louis XIV,' laid down the bold axiom,—which produced in Europe what in our days is called a prolonged sensation,—namely, that '*what policy advises, justice authorizes.*' He insisted upon the obligation of putting an end to quarrels, which had been so cleverly fomented between father and son; the necessity of avenging the cause of the sovereigns, of not allowing an insult to the majesty of thrones to go unpunished, of not abandoning Spain to the avidity of England.' 'Will your Majesty,' said this worthy minister, 'allow this new prey to be devoured by England?' There was no danger that Napoleon would let others perform a task which he so well knew how to perform himself.

The second report, dated September 1, was a short statement of acts of monstrous ingratitude by which the Spaniards had responded to the benevolent intentions of the Emperor. The *corrupting gold* of England, the passions of *the Spanish populace*, the influence of the *monks*, the *intrigues of the agents of the Inquisition who dreaded reform*, had disappointed hopes that were so just and generous. 'But,' it added, 'would Napoleon allow England to say, Spain is one of my provinces?—never! To prevent such shame and misfortune two millions of brave soldiers are ready, if necessary, to cross the Pyrenees.'

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Clarke's mission was to prove to the Senate that these last words were no empty metaphor. His report began by stating, 'That France never had had a larger or finer army,' and, in consequence of this assertion he concluded by demanding from the Senate, not an ordinary conscription of eighty thousand men, but a levy of *one hundred and sixty thousand.* This exorbitant levy was no longer one year, but sixteen months in advance, and struck at one blow both the young men, who, according to rule, ought not to have been called out until 1810, and those older ones who had escaped the preceding conscriptions, then considered so onerous. 'And is there anything extraordinary,' said Clarke, 'in the fact, that the immense population of France should afford the spectacle of a million of armed men, ready to punish England?' Really extraordinary was the fact that this million of men were armed for a cause not their own, and allowed themselves to be marked like a flock of sheep sent to the slaughter-house. It had been said of the Revolution that, like Saturn, it devoured its children, but what were the sacrifices of the Reign of Terror compared to this fearful holocaust consummated in cold blood, with the tranquil self-complacency of a reaper mowing down his corn?

The author of these homicidal measures himself addressed a message to the Senate, the better to make them feel the necessity of obedience. 'He imposed these fresh sacrifices upon his people *with confidence* . . . . they were necessary in order to spare them greater ones, and to lead to the grand result of general peace.' Every war under the Empire was the last war; as under the Reign of Terror, every proscription was the last proscription. 'Frenchmen!' added Napoleon, 'My plans have only one end in view, *your happiness and the security of your children* . . . . You have so often told me *that you love me!* I shall estimate the truth of your sentiments by the zeal you show in seconding plans so nearly affecting your own dearest interests, the honour of the Empire, and *my glory!*' It would not have been easy to prove how these interests, this honour, this glory could consist in covering the Spanish Pen-

insula with bloodshed and ruin. If France really did love Napoleon, she was cruelly rewarded; and strange were the proofs of love which his tender soul demanded.

Lacépède was again, on this occasion, interpreter of the feelings of the Senate. 'Anarchy,' he said, 'that blind and ferocious monster, from which Napoleon's genius has delivered France,—has now lighted her torches and raised her scaffolds in the middle of Spain! England has hastened to send her armies thither and to unite her standard with the hideous ensigns of the satellites of Terror. . . . But the Emperor's arm shall liberate the Spaniards. . . . Ah! how the royal spirits of Louis XIV, of Francis I, and of the Great Henry must be consoled by Napoleon's generous resolve. . . . The French will respond to his sacred voice. He asks for a new pledge of their love. With what ardour they will run to him!'[1]

Such was the tone of the period. I shall not stop to discuss the possible sincerity of such language. It is at least doubtful whether true sentiments could ever have been thus expressed. It is more interesting and more useful to inquire how and why this language deluded Napoleon's contemporaries, for one is obliged to admit that it must have made a certain impression on them, when the highest body in the state could have used it. This style, then so much in vogue, was only a new application of that taste for theatrical declamation, which, at all times, has been the shame and the scourge of our nation, but which especially marked the decline of the French Revolution. For Napoleon substitute 'the people,' and you will find a thousand examples of Lacépède's harangue in the period which preceded the French Empire. The flatterers had changed masters, but the flattery remained what it had been—pretentious, pompous, and low. Napoleon, from the outset of his career, understood perfectly how much this false rhetoric favoured his false grandeur, and for this reason he preached and encouraged it by example. The affectation was general; from high to low every one declaimed; those in command as well as those who

[1] Speech of Count Lacépède in the sitting of September 10, 1808. *Archives parlementaires.*

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obeyed, and the style rapidly fell to the last point of degradation, although on that account, perhaps, it became more popular. One is justified in affirming as matter of history, that the arts and manners of the Empire powerfully strengthened this inclination, which weakened the simplicity of the national mind, debased our forms of oratory, and has at length made our people the certain prey of the most miserable political *charlatans*.

The hundred and sixty thousand men of the new levy were destined to replace those old troops on the Rhine, which Napoleon withdrew from the depths of Germany in order to send them to the Pyrenees. He left, it is true, twenty thousand in reserve, not considering the circumstances sufficiently urgent to recall them all.[1] Independently of the sixty thousand men who remained on the Ebro with King Joseph, and of the fifteen to twenty thousand that occupied the fortified towns in Catalonia, he intended to bring into Spain two hundred thousand soldiers who had gone through the wars in the north, so as to crush the rebellion by one blow. He calculated that, even after this deduction, he would still have 200,000 French in Germany under the orders of Marshal Davout and Bernadotte, 100,000 men of the contingents from the Confederation of the Rhine, and finally, another 100,000 men on the Isonzo, under Prince Eugène; that is to say, a total force of 400,000 soldiers to keep Austria in check.[2] The great army (*la grande armée*) was consequently broken up and reorganized under the name of the Army of the Rhine. The army of Spain was first divided into six, then definitively into eight corps, the command of which he gave to his best lieutenants, Ney, Lannes, Soult, Victor, Saint-Cyr, Lefebvre, Mortier, and Junot. He then incorporated amongst his own troops several regiments composed of Italians, of Poles, of Dutch, and of Germans, forcing these people, while regretting the liberty they had lost, to fight for the enslavement of the only nation whose example they ought to have imitated.

[1] Napoleon to Lacuée, September 10, 1808.

[2] Napoleon to Jerome, September 7; to Soult, September 10.

All these soldiers, who had so often been told that their victories on the Niemen had brought about peace, and yet were so soon again called upon to fight for it anew on the Guadalquivir, might perhaps perceive that their credulity was somewhat abused; they might tire of promenades, at once so glorious and so fearfully sanguinary, and of promises perpetually evaded; of a never-ending task accomplished with so much difficulty. It was necessary therefore, to prevent dangerous reflections on their part, to dazzle them, to blind them to their position, to lead them to slaughter in Spain as to a festival. Napoleon, consequently, had a magnificent reception prepared for them in the towns through which they passed between the Rhine and the Pyrenees; and as the municipalities were not rich enough to incur the expense, he indemnified them at the rate of three francs per man: 'Addresses, verses, theatrical representations gratis, dinners,—such,' he wrote to the Minister of the Interior, 'is what I expect from the citizens for the soldiers on their return as conquerors.'[1] At Metz, Nancy, Reims, Paris, Tours, Bourges, and Bourdeaux, the heroes of the *grande armée* were received with noisy fêtes, which, however, did not succeed in making them entirely forget that they were like passing guests who are made to enter by one door and instantly have to leave by the other. Napoleon at least seems to have been of this opinion, for our soldiers had not gone halfway on their route when he wrote again to Cretet to advise him to have '*songs* composed in Paris,' for the purpose of reviving enthusiasm. But on what subjects were these songs to be written? On tyrants? No evil should any more be said of them. On the country? Every one knew it was not in danger. Perfidious Albion was a worn-out theme. 'They must treat,' said the Emperor, 'of *the liberty* . . . of the Sea!'[2] The liberty of the sea! what an irresistible stimulant for the poet's imagination and for the soldier's heroism! 'You must have three kinds of songs made,' he added, 'so that the soldier may not hear the same thing sung

[1] Napoleon to Cretet, September 3, 1808.

[2] Ib., September 17, 1808.

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twice.' In real life as on the stage, it is never desirable too closely to examine the hidden springs by means of which grand transformations of scenery are produced, lest in so doing we shall exaggerate their importance; but this admission once made, one must confess that more wretched machinery never set in motion more paltry stage-scenery.

The Emperor Alexander had already started for Erfurt, accompanied only by some high functionaries of his court, his brother the Grand Duke Constantine amongst the number, and his minister old Romanzoff, almost the only partisan whom the French alliance could boast in Russia. Alexander had quitted St. Petersburg amid the extreme displeasure of his subjects, still most hostile to his new policy, and in spite of his mother's entreaties who felt excessively alarmed at this journey. There is no doubt that the termination of the interview at Bayonne was not calculated to inspire Alexander with unmixed confidence, but his position was far from being the same as that of the King of Spain. By seizing Ferdinand's person, Napoleon might have thought, with a certain amount of plausibility, that he was by that one stroke seizing his kingdom; but a similar delusion was impossible with regard to Russia. The essay, moreover, had too signally failed to induce him to try it a second time.

It is always dangerous and often puerile to desire to interpret the secret sentiments of historical personages. But if the experience of mankind and the circumstances of his position affected Alexander as they ordinarily would other men, it is allowable to believe that he brought with him to this interview but meagre sympathy for his august ally. Seduced by the promises made at Tilsit, he had sacrificed to Napoleon the generous illusions of his youth, his popularity in Europe, and the almost superstitious attachment of his subjects; he had sacrificed to him his own self-respect; and yet, even after these sacrifices, the promises had not been kept. He had received from him only one present, of a description for which no one is grateful, because it must be accepted with a blush,—Finland, taken from a relative. And if Napoleon now seemed

more disposed to fulfil his engagements, Alexander knew to what accident he owed this unhoped-for civility; his courtiers themselves did not hesitate to speak of it. 'The Emperor Alexander has had many churches built,' said Tolstoï, the ambassador, to his brother, Count Nicholas; 'advise him to have one built to *Notre Dame del soccorro d'Espagne*.'[1]

Spain, most certainly, was the sole cause of the revival of friendship shown by Napoleon to the Czar. The affairs he had to arrange with Alexander could have been as well settled in Paris as at Erfurt, and by correspondence as well as by an interview. What the two sovereigns had to say to each other in no way necessitated a personal meeting; their feelings could not be of a very friendly nature after so many reciprocal misunderstandings. Napoleon made up his mind beforehand to satisfy his ally, by giving him the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, which had been the cause of their mutual coldness; he was not a man to modify his plans under the influence of a conversation. Moreover, he could not hide from himself that his position with regard to Alexander was far from being so favourable as at Tilsit. His prestige, at that time perfect, had sensibly diminished since. His armies, then deemed invincible, had experienced checks as humiliating as they were disastrous. These were strong reasons for avoiding an interview, which could not fail to rouse reflections on the past.

But necessity spoke more loudly than pride. After the immense retrograde movement which he had executed with his troops from the Oder to the Rhine, and on the eve of an expedition into Spain, he felt it necessary to obtain at any cost a manifestation of such a nature as might intimidate Europe; and to produce this result, it did not suffice, in his opinion, to make the Franco-Russian alliance publicly known, but he desired to make a parade of his intimacy with Alexander in some manner that would strike all minds. He even thought of asking him for one of his sisters in marriage, so that this friendship might appear indissoluble. This admirable

[1] Comte de Maistre: *Correspondance diplomatique.*

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master of stage effect had therefore deliberately overcome his repugnances, in order to give Europe a grand representation. But the advantages to be derived from the interview at Erfurt consisted solely in the value of opinion, which after all is very transitory. In reality, Napoleon had to undertake all the trouble of the business, and although he received little more than moral support in exchange for the most substantial concessions, he seemed at Erfurt almost as if indebted to the sovereign, of whom at Tilsit he had been the protector.

The two Emperors met on the 27th of September, on the road between Weimar and Erfurt. They embraced each other with that air of perfect cordiality of which Kings alone possess the secret, especially when their intention is rather to stifle than to embrace. They made their entry into the town on horseback together, amidst an immense concourse of people. Napoleon had wished by its magnificence to render the reception worthy of the illustrious guests who had agreed to meet at Erfurt. He had sent thither from the storehouses of the crown, bronzes, porcelain, the richest hangings, and the most sumptuous furniture. He desired that the *Comédie-Française* should heighten the brilliant effects of these fêtes by performing the chief masterpieces of our stage, from *Cinna* down to *La Mort de César*, before this royal audience. The day was passed in promenades, in military manœuvres, in the chase on a large scale in the Saxon forests. In the evening Alexander dined with Napoleon, and they then proceeded to the theatre, there to hear Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire acted by Talma and Mdlle. Duchesnois. The evening terminated with the Emperor of Russia.

All the natural adherents of Napoleon hastened to answer his appeal by flocking to Erfurt, for he did not lose sight of his principal object, and his desire was to appear before Europe surrounded by a court composed of kings. In this cortege were to be seen those of Bavaria, of Wurtemburg, of Saxony, of Westphalia, and Prince William of Prussia; and beside these stars of first magnitude twinkled the obscure Pleiades of the Rhenish Confederation. The reunion, almost exclusively German, was

meant to prove to German idealists the vanity of their dreams. Were not all present who had any weight in Germany from their power, rank, or riches? Was it not even hinted that the Emperor of Austria had implored the favour, without being able to obtain it, of admission to the conferences of Erfurt.[1] This report was most improbable, for, after such an affront, the Emperor of Austria never could have sent Baron de Vincent to Erfurt with a letter full of the most flattering compliments to the Emperor of the French; but the credulity with which such rumours were accepted gives an idea of the haughty tone of omnipotence adopted at Erfurt by the two arbiters of Europe. By the side of those powerful ones of the earth rejoicing in their subjection, and proud to be the courtiers of the King of Kings, what could the poor conspirators of the *Tugendbund* and of the *Teutschbund* effect? Nor could there be any harm in leaving them in their cellars in peace, and letting them exhale their mystic love of Grand *Teutonia*—a metaphysical abstraction worthy of a like chimerical worship!

And soon a worse defection followed, for the kings of intellect came in their turn to bow down before Cæsar. Goethe and Wieland were presented to Napoleon; they appeared at his court, and by their glory adorned his triumph. German patriotism was severely tried at Erfurt; but it may be said that of all its humiliations the one which the Germans most deeply resented was that of beholding their greatest literary genius decking himself out with Napoleon's favours. The men of Goethe's generation always bore him ill-will for his conduct towards Napoleon; the present one has shown more indulgence, and in our days transcendental criticism almost looks upon this as one of his claims to glory. It beholds in it the sign of

[1] This fact, stated rather lightly by Lucchesini, Bignon, and many other historians, is in reality founded only on an equivocal declaration contained in a report of M. de Champagny (dated March 2, 1809) which attributes the following words to Metternich: 'No doubt, if the Emperor had been willing to admit the Emperor, my master, to Erfurt, or if he had only allowed me to go there, as I proposed . . . .' It is very likely that Metternich asked this authorisation only for himself, and that they feared his clear-sightedness too much to grant it to him.

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a serenity wellnigh divine, of an impartial mind superior to the petty contests of this nether world. Goethe himself has taken care not to adopt this tone of pathos; it were unjust to make him responsible for it. In his conversations with Eckermann he limits himself to pleading extenuating circumstances, and it is more than probable that he would have accepted the reveries of his apologists only with a Mephistophelean smile. The justification which he himself gave was far more modest. Generalizing the reproach that had been addressed to him, he examines with evident emotion,—beneath which ill-suppressed remorse is very perceptible,—whether he could and ought to have adopted, in favour of his oppressed country, the noble and militant action of Kœrner, Arndt, and Rückert. Far from alleging the existence of any absolute incompatibility between the *rôle* of poet and that of citizen, he excuses himself on account of his being sixty instead of twenty years of age, and no longer capable of feeling or expressing warlike passions; to which it may be added, that Goethe was still in many respects a man of the *ancien régime*, and that he held a place about the court of the Grand Duke of Weimar,—an embarrassing circumstance even for an Olympian. 'How,' he says, 'could I have taken up arms without hatred? and how could I have hated without youth? If this event had happened in my twentieth year, I should not have been the last . . . Moreover, we cannot all serve our country in the same manner; every one does his best according to where God has placed him. I have given myself trouble enough during half a century . . . I never allowed myself any recreation; I never rested night or day; I always marched in front, always tried to act, and always acted, as best I could. If every one can say as much, then all will be right.[1]

An admirable apology and worthy of this great mind, so superior to his miserable school. The question thus stated sounds most plausible, for it does not pretend to attribute merit, nay almost virtue, to natural inaptitude. Certain it is, that a genius of this order renders as great service to mankind by

[1] *Conversations with Goethe*, translated by Delérot, v. 2. See also his *Entretien* with Laden in 1813.

producing works which honour and raise the human mind, as by enrolling himself in the most legitimate insurrection. He who pays his debt as a thinker may be dispensed from paying it as a soldier. But the very fact of invoking this species of exoneration is an acknowledgment that he would be greater who could perform the two tasks simultaneously. Moreover, mark well how this skilful pleader, who seeks to excuse absence and neutrality, pronounces no absolution on connivance. It may be well to dispense the poet from acting the part of patriot, but not from having the sentiments of a patriot, unless he is to descend to the lowest rank of virtuoso. Now Goethe, coming to salute Napoleon, and receiving from him the decoration of the Legion of Honour, in presence of humbled Germany, could neither be indifferent nor simply curious; he performed acts of adherence; he abandoned that attitude of passive resignation beneath which he says that he wished to take refuge; he dealt a painful blow to those who were preparing to fight for the deliverance of their country. He has himself, in a circumstantial note, described the flattering reception which Napoleon gave him. After having observed him silently for some moments the Emperor said, '*You are a man, Monsieur de Goethe!*' No doubt the eulogium was great and well merited. But, whilst acknowledging that Goethe was truly a man in the highest acceptation of the term, it must be added that in this circumstance he was nothing but a chamberlain.

The theatrical effect which Napoleon had in view in this solemn show at Erfurt, having once been produced, his principal object was attained, for the political questions which remained for settlement with Alexander could not raise any serious difficulty. In view of the immediate and certain cession of two such important provinces as those of Wallachia and Moldavia, the Czar, without much trouble, renounced that division of the Ottoman Empire with which he had been tantalised for more than a year. Alexander the more readily agreed to acquiesce in this new arrangement, that the equivalent asked in exchange for a gain so invaluable to him, was far less than that demanded at Tilsit. He bound himself,

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it is true, by the Treaty of Erfurt, to continue his co-operation with Napoleon in the war against England (Article 2), and, should it so befall, also against Austria (Article 10); but the affairs in Spain threw every attack upon England into the background; and as to the eventuality of a war against Austria, the conditions were laid down in such vague general terms, that the mode and measure of the assistance promised by Alexander were left very much at his own discretion. He engaged only 'to *declare* himself against Austria, should Austria enter upon war with France.' France, on her side, undertook to make common cause with Russia should Austria endeavour to oppose the occupation of the Principalities. The only very distinct engagement which the treaty imposed on Alexander was the recognition of 'the new order of things established by France in Spain'; but who does not see that, far from imposing any sacrifice upon him, this engagement could only overpower him with joy? It proved, in fact, that this war in Spain, the cause of all our embarrassments at that period, and which neutralized our influence in Europe, was about to be pursued and to end in tying up our hands. In exchange for two provinces which the Sultan could not keep from him, the Czar made over to us a country in revolt, a volcano in eruption, which would annihilate our troops and perpetuate our embarrassments. This fatal gift, which Alexander offered us with so much grace, could cause him but one regret, that of not having more such countries to offer us.

The Treaty of Erfurt was to be accompanied, like that of Tilsit, by a proposal of peace made to England on the basis of the *uti possidetis*. This arrangement gave rise to a short debate, which is too characteristic to be passed over in silence. The peace proposed to England having, as one of its first conditions, her preliminary consent to the establishment of Napoleon in Spain and Portugal, and that of Alexander in Finland and the Principalities, 'the high contracting parties' could not but see that their offer ran great risk of not being even listened to. Napoleon proposed to avoid this difficulty by postponing all notification to Turkey on the subject of the Principalities, until

the answer of the British Cabinet should have been received. Once, said he, let England have decided in favour of peace; once let one of those strong currents of opinion have been created which then become law to the Government, she will have advanced too far to retreat, she will be forced to consent to everything, and Alexander may then without risk unmask his designs by breaking with Turkey. If, on the contrary, this rupture were to take place prematurely, 'when the news reached England that such a power shared her interests it would render her more exacting.'[1]

Never did the faithless negotiator of the Treaty of Amiens, and of so many other transactions violated as soon as concluded, display more clearly the processes of his perfidious diplomacy. But Alexander had too much penetration not to perceive that the proposed adjournment was a two-edged sword which might strike Russia as well as England. If Napoleon, in fact, came to an agreement with the British Cabinet, what guarantee had Alexander that this adjournment might not become a lasting one? Had he not already been deceived after receiving the most formal promises? And if Napoleon was so anxious to keep on good terms with England, might he not himself postpone his projects against Spain, since they were so hateful to that power? Alexander consequently ordered his minister Romanzoff to remain inflexible, and his obstinacy succeeded. 'Romanzoff wishes that everything should be precise,' wrote Champagny to his master. 'He will more willingly consent to a delay of a fixed period. The vague nature of the Tilsit articles, he said, has done us much harm; an army has been lost, and, so far, that is the only result of our alliance with you. . . . *The sentiment which pervaded every word was that of distrust; distrust of events, distrust also of our intentions.*' Such in reality was the touching harmony that reigned between the two friends who had come to embrace each other at Erfurt.

While their ministers were struggling to find some literary artifice whereby, well or ill, to conceal their disagreements, the

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, Oct. 8, 1808.

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two sovereigns continued to lavish upon each other every mark of the most lively affection. They could no longer live apart. They showed themselves together everywhere,—at the theatre, at the promenade, at the chase. It should be well understood by the entire world that they had become inseparable. As to the rather unflattering matters lurking in the depths of their hearts, it was the two ministers who spoke of them to each other. Thanks to that wise expedient everything passed off harmoniously, and the sovereigns were able to appear in public with countenances beaming with mutual sympathy. Every one knows how Alexander, during the representation of Œdipus, applied those famous lines to Napoleon:

'The friendship of a great man is a benefit from the gods.'

After all, the Principalities were well worth a compliment, and Alexander obtained them in the end, without the restrictive clause which his ally desired to insert in the treaty. He likewise obtained the remission of twenty millions for Prussia, in exchange for a promise not to take any further interest in Italy or Hanover. Nor was Napoleon more successful in a negotiation of a very different nature which he commissioned Talleyrand to carry on with the Czar. After having for some time indulged the hope that he might be spontaneously offered what he was longing to ask, and almost irritated at not being understood, Napoleon at length confided to Talleyrand the delicate mission of sounding the Czar on the subject of a family alliance. He was obliged at length to confess the secret of his ambition, his project—so often denied—of repudiating Josephine! Alexander had a sister, the Grand Duchess Catherine, who, according to the report of her contemporaries, was not only accomplished, but gifted with an exceptionally superior intellect. To quote only a single witness, General Moreau, who saw her constantly in 1813, speaks of her in his private correspondence as the most remarkable woman he had ever known. It was upon her that Napoleon had cast his eyes. The overture was made with that exquisite tact which he had a right to expect from Talleyrand, and Alexander received it in the most gracious manner possible. But the

communication was most embarrassing to him, for while on one side he was afraid of offending a man from whom he expected so many advantages, on the other he did not wish to impose either upon his people, upon his family, nor, in fine, upon his sister an alliance which he knew would be odious to them, and for which even he himself felt very little sympathy. He skilfully steered clear of all these difficulties by alleging the necessity of overcoming his mother's opposition,—the decided enemy of French influence, and absolute sovereign in the bosom of her family. He expressed the most flattering regrets to Napoleon, thanked him cordially for the honour he wished to do the Imperial House of Russia, even manifested a hope of being able at some future day to arrange to their mutual satisfaction a union which was the dearest wish of his heart:—but Napoleon obtained nothing more. Like a wise man, Talleyrand took advantage of these matrimonial confidences to marry his nephew Edmund de Périgord to the Duchess of Courland, a relative to the Czar.[1] And that union was the chief visible result of the labours of French diplomacy at Erfurt.

[1] Meneval, *Souvenirs historiques.*

CHAPTER XI.

NAPOLEON IN SPAIN.

November 1808—*January* 1809.

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NAPOLEON had no sooner terminated his arrangements with Alexander, than he hastened to make Europe feel it by the haughty and irritating arrogance of his language. Austria especially, being the only continental power which at that moment could cause him embarrassment, should, he thought, be made to reflect on the consequences of this new change of fortune. Never capable, however, when successful, of keeping within bounds, instead of showing firmness and resolution, he broke forth into threats and bravado. On the 14th of October he answered the very courteous letter which Baron de Vincent had brought him from the Emperor of Austria on the 29th of September. Having commenced by reminding this sovereign *that he might have dismembered the Austrian monarchy if he wished, but that he did not*,—an assertion remarkable in the first place for its bad taste, and secondly untrue, for even after Austerlitz he could not have done so without ruining himself,—Napoleon proceeded to give the Emperor a series of warnings, which he intended to be so many insults to his dignity as a sovereign. 'What your Majesty is, *you are by my consent.* That is the best proof that our accounts are settled, and that I require nothing more from you. . . . . But your Majesty *ought not* to give cause for recommencing a discussion which fifteen years of war have ended. *You ought* to forbid every proceeding which can provoke war. . . . . Let your Majesty abstain from

every armament *which may cause me any uneasiness*, or make a diversion in favour of England. . . . Let your Majesty distrust all those who, by speaking of danger to your kingdom, disturb your happiness, that of your family, and of your people!'

This grave counsellor, who might have been the first to profit by the lessons of which he was so prodigal, ended his admonition by laying down a maxim pre-eminently edifying in his mouth. 'The best policy to-day,' he says, 'is *Simplicity and Truth!*' Such a profession of faith from the hand that signed the treaty of Bayonne was a priceless curiosity, a truly royal gem; above all, it was a clear indication of the sincerity and good intentions of Napoleon. So much so that the Emperor of Austria, more deeply impressed than ever with the necessity of taking advantage of the remarkable opportunity afforded him by the war in Spain, continued to press forward his armaments with as much activity as the difficulties of his position and the vicinity of so suspicious a neighbour would permit.

The proposal for peace which the two potentates of Erfurt had agreed to address to England, was drawn up in a far more moderate tone. They appealed to the duty of 'yielding to the wishes and requirements of all nations, and of putting an end to the misfortunes of Europe. Peace was as much the interest of the people of the Continent as of the people of Great Britain. They joined therefore in begging His Britannic Majesty to hearken to the *voice of humanity* by silencing that of passion, so as to insure the happiness of Europe, and of the present generation.' (October 12, 1808.)

This overture was made in the form of a letter addressed to the King of England, like all the communications of the same nature which Napoleon had previously forwarded to the British Cabinet. He had already endeavoured, but in vain, to enter into direct and personal relations with that monarch; to engage him in one of those seductive dialogues in which he considered himself to excel, and which, once entered upon, would have been in itself a recognition by anticipation. But he had never succeeded in extracting in answer one word signed by the

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King of England. Constitutional scruples must, he imagined, have their weight in a persistence which drove him wild; and he thought that by presenting the name of the Emperor of Russia this time by the side of his own, he would force King George to swerve from his system. As to the substance of his proposition, could he flatter himself that it would be accepted? One is almost tempted to believe it on seeing the innumerable precautions he recommended to his two negotiators, Champagny and Romanzoff, desiring them to avoid everything which could raise a difficulty or rouse British susceptibility. But it is impossible to admit that he could have had any serious intentions in making this overture, when it is seen that he was marching towards Spain with 200,000 men at the very moment that he was proposing the *uti possidetis* as the basis of the negotiations. How could he suppose that England, who had begun the war for Malta, would stop it at the moment he was seizing Spain and Portugal?

Whatever may have been his secret intention, his expectations were doubly disappointed. He obtained no answer from King George; and that of the Ministry addressed to him through Canning (October 28) soon proved to him that if he had hoped to discourage the Spanish insurgents by the news of negotiations in progress with England, his calculations in this respect would now be baffled. The note written by Canning, without repelling the offer made by the two Emperors, clearly showed that their proposal had no chance of being accepted unless all the allies of England were admitted to the negotiations; and amongst these allies figured not only the Kings of Naples, Portugal and Sweden, but the Spanish insurgents also. England, said Canning, was not yet bound to Spain by any formal treaty, but she had undertaken engagements towards that people which were sacred in her eyes, and which bound her irrevocably to their cause.

This answer left little hope of agreement. It reached Paris on October 31. Napoleon had then already started for Spain, and he allowed twenty days to elapse before replying to the British note. On the 19th of November, when sending Champagny

the draft of his answer, he betrayed the thought which had guided him in this long delay, and perhaps had even suggested the negotiations. 'You will find herewith,' he wrote to him, 'the draft of an answer to Mr. Canning's note. You can allow two or three days to pass in consultation with M. de Romanzoff. Then send off an intelligent courier, who will spread the report that *Spain has submitted*, or is on the point of submitting completely; that 80,000 Spaniards are already destroyed, etc., etc.' To increase the supposed effects of this false news, he enjoined Fouché to publish a series of articles in the newspapers of Holland, Germany and Paris, announcing, first, the preparations, then the landing, and lastly the complete success of a purely imaginary expedition by Murat to Sicily. 'Give as details,' said he, 'that King Joachim disembarked with 30,000 men; that he left the Regency to his wife; that he landed at *Faro . . . . so that they may believe it in London, and that it may alarm them.*' (November 19.) All this was pure invention, yet it was to form the subject of a dozen articles. It was with an 'accomplished fact,' therefore, that he intended to startle and win over England to his views. He did not, however, refuse to admit to the negotiations, 'either the King reigning in *Sweden*, or the King reigning in *Sicily*, or the King reigning in the *Brazils*,' but the proposal to admit the Spanish insurgents 'could only be considered *as an insult* on the part of the English Government. . . . . What would the English Government have said if the French Government had proposed to admit the *Catholic insurgents of Ireland?*'

Napoleon deceived himself egregiously by supposing that arguments of this sort would make an impression on the British Cabinet. He committed even a far greater mistake in attributing to Canning's Ministry the timidity and ultra-pacific tendencies of Addington's and Fox's Cabinets. In spite of the reverses sustained by the continental powers, the strength and resources of England had gone on increasing during the last few years. The result of the continental blockade had been to place in her hands the monopoly of trade all over the world; and, especially from the instant that the first symptoms of

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dissolution had shown themselves in the gigantic Empire of the West, neither the English Government nor the nation had desired peace. The British Cabinet consequently hastened to put an end to this phantom of negotiation by a precise and categorical declaration that left no loophole for fresh subterfuges. It solemnly announced its firm intention not to abandon the generous Spanish nation, and by every means in its power to oppose 'an usurpation unparalleled in the history of the world.' This note was followed by an address from the Government to Europe, in which these remarkable words occurred: 'If among those nations which maintain against France a doubtful and precarious independence, there should be any which even now are balancing between the certain ruin of a prolonged inactivity and the contingent dangers of an effort to save themselves from that ruin; to nations so situated the delusive prospect of a peace between Great Britain and France could not fail to be peculiarly injurious. Their preparations might be relaxed by the vain hope of returning tranquillity; or their purpose shaken by the apprehension of being left to contend alone.' (December 15.)

The Emperor had quitted Paris on the 29th of October, after having opened the session of the Legislative Body and solemnly announced 'that he was going to crown the King of Spain in Madrid, *and to plant his eagles on the forts of Lisbon*'; a theatrical and presumptuous announcement, wanting in the only justification that might have excused it—namely, its prompt and complete realization. On November 3 he was at Bayonne, hurrying on the mass of men, horses and baggage which for the two previous months had been constantly passing through that town. Of the eight corps d'armée which were to form the army of Spain, about six had by that time got far into the Peninsula, and the corps of Mortier and Junot alone remained behind. All these troops having advanced towards the Pyrenees before preparations were made for their reception, the passage of such numbers over bad roads and through a country that was totally destitute, had produced indescribable disorder, and the distress was increased by the manner in which the small resources they did find were wasted. Napoleon hastened

to restore order by severely reprimanding the military administration. But here, even more than elsewhere, the opportunity was afforded of observing that, although peculiarly solicitous as to those measures necessary to ensure the supply to his troops of every article of a strictly military kind, such as ammunition, accoutrements, shoes, capotes, etc., he scarcely gave a thought to those intended for the comfort and food of the soldier. He even went so far as to countermand the latter in order to fix the attention of his administrators on the others. 'Send back all the reserve of cattle,' he wrote to Dejean. 'I do not require provisions; I have abundance of everything; nothing is wanting but waggons, military conveyances, great coats, and shoes. I never saw a country where the army was better fed.' Holding the maxim more strongly than ever that war must feed war, and especially desirous to apply it to Spain so as to make her feel the full weight of the calamities she had dared to brave, he left to each corps the duty of providing for itself, and living as best it could. Pillage, instead of being an occasional excess, had henceforth to be resorted to regularly, and became indispensable for the subsistence of the troops. It was made a military institution, and the unfortunate Spaniards were delivered over not only to an army thirsting for revenge, but to the tender mercies of hungry hordes.

During the previous three months, our army in Spain had remained almost inactive in its positions on the Ebro, confining itself to defeating the feeble and ill-managed attacks made on both its flanks by the insurrectionary armies; on one side in Biscay near Bilbao, on the other on the Ebro in Aragon. Joseph, burning with the desire to make himself a military reputation, had conceived and also accepted more than one plan for attacking and, if possible, destroying these corps; but Napoleon had placed his veto on all these fine projects. Having decided on acting with immense strength in Spain, it suited his views to encourage the self-confidence and hardihood of the Spanish generals, and not to commence action until he could collect sufficient force to crush them by one blow, and then suddenly appear as the *Deus ex machinâ*. That

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moment had at length arrived. In the narrow space which extends from the confines of Biscay to the river of Aragon, he had now concentrated five army-corps, commanded by Lefebvre, Victor, Soult, Ney, and Moncey, who was to be replaced by Lannes. A sixth, commanded by Saint-Cyr and intended to act separately, was about to penetrate into Catalonia. Moreover, he had with him the Guard and a large corps of cavalry commanded by Bessières.

Although the zeal and patriotism of the Spaniards were still great, they were ill-prepared to undergo a trial of so dangerous a nature—namely, that of maintaining and consolidating advantages gained by a first burst of enthusiasm. The miraculous success of their insurrection had roused the courage of the most timid, and raised the nation in its own estimation; but it had also excited amongst this unenlightened population, and even amongst many of its chiefs, an overweening confidence. They looked upon their task as ended at the very moment that it was about to become more difficult than ever. They occupied themselves with struggles for power, ambitious rivalries and local petty jealousies, at a time when the national defence ought alone to have absorbed all their thoughts. Instead of vigorously organizing the army, exercising it, calling out all the available population, and choosing strong defensive positions, they lost their time in discussions and idle projects while Napoleon was engaged in heaping regiment upon regiment on the left bank of the Ebro.

The feeling of the necessities of the position had been sufficiently powerful at first to induce the local juntas, which had made the insurrection, to abdicate in favour of a *central junta* which should exercise supreme authority. This central junta was composed of delegates from the local juntas, and it included eminent men amongst its members, such as Jovellanos and Moniño de Floridablanca. Too numerous, unfortunately, to act as an executive body, for it contained thirty-four members, it was, moreover, led by political and literary men, under circumstances and in a state of affairs which imperatively demanded men of action. It published several manifestoes, bestowed upon itself

many magnificent titles, entered upon barren contests with the Royal Council which had preserved its administrative and judicial attributes, but adopted only very few efficacious measures. Some of its acts—concessions to popular passion—are to be regretted; such as the re-establishment of the Inquisition and the suspension of the sale of mortmain property. It cannot be seriously believed that this was a premeditated return towards the past, as the promoter of these measures was that same Floridablanca who had been ambassador to Pope Ganganelli at the time when d'Aranda effected his famous reforms; but it was an ill-conceived protest against the pretensions of French despotism. Napoleon had attacked the monks and the Inquisition, and that sufficed to re-establish them. Making the Inquisition popular was, thus, the first result of this much-vaunted policy!

The military measures which ought solely to have occupied attention in so perilous a crisis, necessarily suffered from the hesitation and incapacity of the central power. The armies of the South had advanced towards the northern provinces; the troops of Seville, of Granada, and of Valencia, had reached the Ebro, under command of Castaños, to assist the insurgents of Castile and the Aragonese defending Saragossa; the ten thousand companions of Romana had come, after their romantic escape, to join the insurgents of Galicia and of the Asturias under General Blake; but in spite of numberless decrees on paper, the effective strength of these armies had scarcely been increased; they were badly armed and worse disciplined; while the commissariat was equally inefficient. With the exception of a few old regular troops, they more resembled a tumultuous gathering than disciplined corps capable of undertaking military operations.

With such elements, one system alone offered any chance of success against so formidable an adversary as Napoleon, and the overwhelming force he had collected. To avoid every general action, to retire step by step to rallying points fixed on beforehand, to let him entangle himself and scatter his troops throughout the vast extent of the Peninsula, to hold

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no positions but those of known strength, to confine themselves in general to harassing his corps, to intercepting his communications, and capturing his convoys, such were the tactics, dictated at once by the nature of the country and the weakness of their resources, which a most distinguished military man, General Dumourier, had recently recommended to the Spanish insurgents, in a kind of manual expressly composed for their benefit. This line of conduct was the only one possible, and the two best generals which Spain then boasted, Blake and Castaños, fully shared Dumourier's views. But so wise a plan neither pleased the presumption of the uneducated classes who wished to attack Napoleon instantly in order to destroy him, nor the suspicious distrust of the provinces, which, apparently abandoned, regarded every retrograde movement as so much treachery; nor did the two generals possess sufficient authority to enforce their opinions.

When Napoleon arrived to place himself at the head of his troops, the Spanish forces were distributed in four principal groups round our positions on the Ebro, forming a vast semicircle, which extended from the mountains of Biscay to the neighbourhood of Caparoso on the Aragon river. Blake operated on the left with from thirty-five to forty thousand men, in the environs of Balmaseda, covering Biscay, Santander and the Asturias, while menacing our communications by the Bayonne route. In the centre, the army of Castaños bordered the river from Cintruenigo to Calahorra, joining, on the right, the army commanded by the brothers Palafox from Tudela to Caparoso, and, with it, numbering nearly forty thousand men. To the rear of these positions, as a reserve near Burgos, extended the army of Estremadura, commanded by Galuzzo, to whom the young Marquis of Belvedere had recently succeeded; it had not yet received its full strength, and he had not more than fifteen thousand men under his orders. There was a fifth army in Catalonia, it is true, but, quartered in that peculiar region as in a sort of entrenched camp where it would soon have to deal with Saint-Cyr and Duhesme, it could exert no influence on the general operations. They

also expected from day to day the co-operation of the English army in Portugal, which was to re-inforce that of Estremadura, but its intervention was forcibly delayed. General Moore, who commanded it, being obliged to effect his junction by land with a corps which had disembarked at Corunna, had himself, on starting from Lisbon, to perform long and difficult marches before he could take any part in the operations of the campaign. Moreover, the obstacles caused by the season, the bad state of the roads, and the difficulty of obtaining provisions without pillage had been increased by delays traceable to the bad feeling of the Spanish authorities. His lieutenant Baird had been detained in quarantine at Corunna, and he had been obliged to send to Madrid before it was possible to obtain a free passage for a corps of auxiliaries.

With somewhat under ninety thousand men, therefore, the Spanish generals were ordered to stand out against the five army-corps which Napoleon had now collected on the Ebro. These corps, averaging five and twenty thousand each, formed, with the Guard and Bessières' cavalry, a total force of at least a hundred and sixty thousand men. Napoleon had only, as it were, to march forward and break, at every point, the Spanish line, which—as if still more to augment its weakness—seemed to have been unduly extended. His plan, at once most simple and decisive, consisted in cutting it in two and advancing straight on Burgos, which was covered only by Belvedere's feeble detachment. Once arrived there, he intended to divide his corps to the right and the left, and thus turn the two principal Spanish armies by pushing one towards the sea, and the other to the Pyrenees, or at the very least, placing them between two fires.

The encounters which had taken place on the eve of Napoleon's entry into Spain, at Zornoza between Blake and Lefebvre, at Logroño and at Lerin, between Ney and Castaños, Moncey and Palafox, might have thwarted this plan had the Spaniards chosen to retreat, but in reality they in no wise interfered with it, as their positions had very nearly remained the same. Napoleon wished to begin by destroying the army

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commanded by Blake. With this view he ordered Lefebvre and Victor to hold him at bay while he himself should advance towards Burgos. These marshals were then to drive Blake to the sea or to the slopes of the mountains which separate Biscay from Old Castile, a point towards which he intended to send Soult from Burgos in order to give a finishing stroke to the remnants of Blake's army. But the Spanish general forestalled his adversaries by attacking them himself. After the combat at Zornoza, Lefebvre had withdrawn in the direction of Burgos, where provisions were more easily obtainable, and to confront Blake, had left only the Villate division in an isolated position at Balmaseda. Victor, sent to Orduño to support Lefebvre, never thought of repairing the fault of his colleague, and contented himself with sending a brigade to Oquendo. The Villate division, thus thrown on its own resources and attacked by superior forces on the 5th of November, was driven back to Bilbao, though not before it had fought valiantly and suffered severely.

The two marshals being severely reprimanded by Napoleon,[1] hastened to efface the impression produced by this unpleasant beginning. Lefebvre at once marched to Balmaseda, encountered a detachment from Blake's army at Guenês, defeated it, and formed a junction with Victor on the very spot formerly occupied by the Villate division. (November 8.) Victor then led the pursuit and plunged into the gorges of the Biscay mountains, following Blake who was forced to retreat. Arrived at Espinosa, the Spanish general collected all his army, which was reduced by the previous fighting and the want of provisions to less than 30,000 men, and determined to hold out in the strong positions afforded by the outskirts of that town. He there resisted Victor's attack with the utmost vigour on the 10th of November. But the battle being renewed on the following day, the effort proved too much for the strength of an army that was far from having the solidity and consistency of regular troops. When the Spaniards therefore, after much sharp fighting, beheld General Maison's division carry the

[1] Napoleon to Lefebvre, Nov. 6, 1808; to Victor, same day.

heights at the point of the bayonet, which were the key of their position, they fled at the same moment; nor can aught else ever be expected from men who do not possess the bond of union which the habit of long service under one flag affords to veteran troops. The fugitives dispersed in all directions, and in one instant the army was dissolved. A large number were killed, but few taken prisoners, and Blake effected his retreat to Reinosa with a few thousand soldiers, destined to serve as a nucleus for rallying an army which no longer existed.

This was the moment when, according to Napoleon's promise, Soult ought to have advanced from Burgos to Reinosa, and there caught or destroyed the remnants of Blake's army. But excellent as the plan was, its execution did not equal its conception, and the Marshal was unable to move soon enough to obtain all the results Napoleon had anticipated. While Lefebvre and Victor were marching against Blake, Napoleon advanced from Vittoria to Burgos, thence to despatch his corps d'armée on the right and left to the rear of Blake and of Castaños. Burgos was defended only by the Marquis de Belvedere's weak detachment, amounting to about twelve thousand men. The Marquis, nevertheless, marched forward to meet Napoleon at Gamonal, so as to obstruct his passage there. His troops sustained the first attack with great intrepidity, but the wood which covered their right having been turned by Lasalle's cavalry and then carried by the infantry of General Mouton, they all fled, retreating even more swiftly than at Espinosa. Our cavalry, who in this flat country had every advantage in their favour, pursued the fugitives sword in hand, so that a regular massacre ensued, and all entering Burgos pell-mell, the town was given up to sack and pillage. (Nov. 10.)

Napoleon did not send Soult to Reinosa until the 13th of November. Had the Marshal started on the 11th, as he might have done, he would have arrived there in time completely to annihilate Blake, but, in consequence of this delay, he did not reach it until the 15th. Meanwhile however he picked up several guns and prisoners on the way, but Blake

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himself had escaped two days before in the direction of Leon, by fearful roads along the base of the Asturian mountains. Soult, having thus failed in his principal object, traversed the province of Santander and the principality of the Asturias in order to establish some semblance of submission, but it was a submission that would not last one minute after his army-corps left the localities he was then passing through.

The presence of the Emperor at Burgos in no degree softened the fate of that unhappy city, which for several days was delivered up to all the horrors of a town taken by assault. Napoleon, never swerving from his system of making examples, and wishing to subdue Spain as much by terror as by force of arms, shut his eyes to all the excesses which soldiers so readily commit when suffering from hunger, or left without control. The towns and villages situated on our march were laid waste as though they had been traversed by hordes of savages. As to Burgos, the abominations were such, that the town was abandoned by its inhabitants. 'A sad sight!' exclaimed Miot, as he entered it on the 12th of November with King Joseph, whose counsellor and friend he was. 'The houses almost all deserted and pillaged, the furniture broken and scattered in the mud; one quarter beyond the Arlanzon on fire; a lawless soldiery bursting open the doors and windows, and breaking every impediment in their way, consuming little though destroying much; the churches robbed, the streets encumbered with dead and dying; in short all the horrors of an assault, *although the town had offered no resistance!* The *Chartreuse* and the principal convents had been sacked. The convent of Las Huelgas, the richest and finest in Old Castile had been converted into a stable; the tombs within the church and cloister had been opened for the sake of the treasures they were supposed to contain, and the bodies of the women which were in them were dragged in the dust and left on the pavement, strewed with bones and pieces of winding-sheets. . . . I saw, under the very windows of the archiepiscopal palace where Napoleon was quartered, a bivouac fire kept alive for a whole night by musical instruments and furniture taken

from the houses. King Joseph tried to make some representations, but they were badly received.'[1]

The Emperor was not only determined to listen to no such representations, but he wished the administrative pillage to complete the good effects of the military violence. In consequence, he confiscated thirty millions worth of wool at Burgos in addition to the English merchandise found there.[2] But this was only a beginning. Under pretext of indemnifying the French residents for their losses, he resolved to lay hands on the immense property belonging to the grandees of Spain in the Peninsula as well as in other countries then beneath our sway: 'The Duke of Infantado and the grandees of Spain,' he wrote to Cretet on the 19th of November, 'own, amongst them alone, half Naples. It were not too much to value their estates in that kingdom at two hundred millions. Besides, they have possessions in Belgium, in Piedmont, and in Italy, which it is my intention to sequestrate. *This is merely a first idea.*'[3] This glorious idea had been preceded on the 12th of November by a decree of outlawry against ten noblemen selected from amongst the richest grandees of Spain, and which, declaring them traitors and enemies of France, condemned them to be tried by a military commission and *passés par les armes*. This decree of outlawry was styled 'a decree of amnesty,' according to that ingenious nomenclature which Napoleon applied to all his acts. By other arrangements the Emperor promised full and entire pardon to all other Spaniards who should make their submission within the space of one month from the date of our entry into Madrid. It was expected that this last clause would induce the Spanish people to regard as an act of clemency a cruel act of spoliation which was in reality but a fearful abuse of victory.

At the same time the Imperial bulletins poured forth calumny and insult on the Spanish troops as much as on the

[1] *Mémoires* of Miot de Melito, vol. iii.
[2] *Moniteur* of Nov. 21, 1808.
[3] Napoleon to Cretet, Nov. 19.

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nation itself.[1] 'The soldiers of the insurrection were simply ridiculous braggarts, worthy compatriots of Don Quixote. Gross ignorance, silly presumption, cruelty towards the weak, compliance and cowardice towards the strong; this was the spectacle presented to our view! *The monks and the inquisition had brutalized this nation!* . . . . The Spanish troops, like the Arabs, could only fight from behind houses; the monks were illiterate and intemperate; the peasants on a par with the Fellahs of Egypt; the rich degenerate, and without energy or influence.' General Romana was never mentioned in these bulletins but as the *traitor Romana*. The Bishop of Santander, who had written against us, but with the utmost dignity and eloquence, was represented as 'a furious and fanatical man, of a diabolical turn of mind, and who always walked about with a cutlass at his side.'[2] Such was the usual picture drawn by Napoleon of the people whom he found it difficult to subdue. In remarkable contradiction, however, he endeavoured, on the other hand, to transform his insignificant skirmish at Gamonal into a signal victory; the twelve flags picked up upon that battle-field, he sent with great pomp to the Legislative Body, and, in a word, was as triumphant as if Spain had been conquered at one blow.

This boasting, which was far from being cleverly done, Napoleon intended for England, in the hope that she would be sufficiently deceived to make her resign herself to excluding the Spaniards from the negotiations. But the haughty and decisive rupture which terminated the parleys soon convinced him how useless were these tricks, and their only result was the abiding remembrance of his invectives amongst a people who never forgive an injury.

Blake's army being, if not destroyed, at least dispersed, Napoleon recalled Lefebvre's and Victor's corps, which had become useless in Biscay, and then instantly turned back

[1] It is not known why these bulletins have not been reproduced by the editors of Napoleon's *Correspondance*. Does the *Moniteur*, where they can be read, seem to them a suspicious authority?

[2] See the *Moniteur* of Nov. 16, 19, 21, 26, and 27; Dec. 2 and 4, 1808.

against the as yet unbroken army of Castaños and Palafox. It had remained stationary, opposite to Moncey's corps, extending from Cintruenigo to Caparoso, on both banks of the Ebro. Before long however, in consequence of the representations of Castaños, who understood the danger of this position, it was concentrated in the neighbourhood of Tudela. The Emperor now desired rapid and decisive action. He appointed Marshal Lannes to the command of Moncey's corps, augmenting it to 35,000 men, and thus rendering it little inferior to that of Castaños, which scarcely numbered forty thousand. Anxious to achieve complete success, he had ordered Ney to execute the manœuvre against Castaños which Soult had conducted against Blake; but for this purpose he made him march a long way round, so as to conceal his object. At the same time, however, he gave him far too small a force; for Ney was sent to the rear to cut off the army of Castaños with but twelve thousand men. He was to advance from Burgos by Aranda and Osma to Soria, which was situated about twenty leagues in rear of the Spanish army; then, having reached that point, he was to march on either to Agreda or to Calatayud in order to strike a final blow against the troops which Lannes was to put to flight at Tudela.

The plan, no doubt, was very specious. But if, as was quite possible, Castaños should choose to retreat before being attacked, Ney would then find himself alone with only his twelve thousand men to confront an army numbering at least forty thousand, and according to general rumour amounting to sixty thousand; he would find himself isolated and unsupported, in a rebellious country, and far removed from his base of operation. The manœuvre he was instructed to perform was of a most hazardous description, and the perplexity which he has been reproached for having felt on this occasion does as much honour to his military *coup d'œil* as to his patriotism.

Everything having been thus prepared, Lannes, at early dawn on November 23, marched on Tudela, where the Aragonese, commanded by Palafox, had taken up their position. The Spaniards

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were protected on their right by the Ebro; to the left their line stretched as far as Cascante where the Valencians and the Andalusians were encamped under Castaños. This exaggerated extension of nearly four leagues, which moreover left the centre almost bare of troops for the benefit of the wings, clearly indicated the natural tendency of the Aragonese to cover their capital of Saragossa, and that of the Andalusians to incline off towards the south. Lannes quickly punished them for these faults. He first took advantage of the long distance at which Castaños' corps stood, to direct all his force against the centre and the Spanish right. At the same time that his infantry, commanded by Maurice Mathieu, rushed in columns to the assault of the heights above the Ebro, Lefebvre's cavalry charged the Valencians of the centre in the plain, and threatened to turn them. This attack was boldly withstood by the right, and repulsed in the centre by a skilful manœuvre of Don Juan O'Neil. Lannes renewed it by sending the two divisions of Grandjean and Morlot against the centre, which made it give way. The Polish lancers at once rushed through the breach they had made, and their presence causing a panic amongst these inexperienced troops, they fled in the utmost disorder across the olive woods that here thickly cover the plain.

This occurred at the very time when the Aragonese, closely pressed by Maurice Mathieu, were beginning to lose ground on the side of the Ebro. At sight of the panic which left their flanks uncovered, they too withdrew, and began to retreat along the Saragossa road pursued by the cavalry of Lefebvre-Desnouettes. Meanwhile La Peña, lieutenant of Castaños, had, though somewhat late, hastened from Cascante to assist the Spanish centre, which by that time was annihilated. This reinforcement, composed of excellent troops, at first repulsed the Musnier division sent against it by Lannes. Nor did it withstand the charges of our cavalry-reserve with less vigour. But attacked before long by the Lagrange division, which came to the help of its brethren-in-arms, the division of La Peña was, in its turn, surrounded, and driven back to Borgia pell-mell with

the fragments of the defeated centre. Nay, more: it drew along with it in its flight the other divisions of Castaños, till turning in the direction of Calatayud it at length effected its retreat under the protection of nightfall.

The Spaniards lost at Tudela about four thousand men in killed and wounded, with almost all their artillery. Meantime Ney remained motionless at Soria, where he was in vain expecting the Spanish army that had retreated to Calatayud. He had arrived there on the 22nd of November, at midday. By starting again on the same day he might have reached Agreda on the next, the 23rd, as prescribed to him by an order from head quarters. But that order, inexact, ill-conceived, and dated at four o'clock in the afternoon of November 21, from Burgos, stated that the battle was *to take place on the 22nd at Calahorra.* Ney could not, at the earliest, have received it until five or six o'clock in the afternoon of the 22nd; and it must then have appeared too late to begin a march of twenty leagues in order to take part in a battle that would be over before he could start. Moreover, he was not yet free from his original anxiety as to the possible movements of the Spanish army, and in view of this uncertainty he deemed it more prudent to await events in the positions he had chosen. Napoleon himself bitterly reproached him for this inaction. But it was certainly not caused by faintheartedness. Historians have regarded it as due to jealousy of Lannes, without reflecting that jealousy on such an occasion would have urged him rather to act with presumption and temerity. If he had appeared at Cascante towards the end of the day, he would have shared the honour of the victory with Lannes, for, in such cases, it is he who strikes the *coup de théatre* who produces the principal effect.

The battle of Tudela terminated the first act of the presumed submission of Spain. Of the four armies which had wished to bar the entrances to the Peninsula to us, there only remained,—on the left about eight thousand men who had with difficulty reached Leon under Romana, Blake's successor; in the centre, a feeble reserve of Belvedere's corps, which was now preparing to hinder our passage of the Guadarrama; lastly,

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on the right, the remnants of the army of Andalusia and Valencia stealing away from Calatayud to Sigüenza, sharply pursued by Maurice Mathieu, and later by Ney. As to the Aragonese, they had shut themselves up in Saragossa. The English army had not yet succeeded in effecting its concentration. Its principal corps, conducted from Lisbon by General Moore, had, it is true, reached Salamanca on the 13th of November; but the bad news which he there received of Blake's army, made him feel the necessity of reuniting his scattered forces before advancing into Old Castile. Moore had in consequence to wait for his cavalry and artillery, which he had sent by the easier roads of the Tagus valley, from Almaraz to Talavera, before he could proceed to meet his lieutenant, Baird; who, on his side, having started very late from Corunna, had not yet reached Astorga.

This state of affairs allowed Napoleon to advance straight on to Madrid, without any fear of his communications being interrupted. Soult's corps—then about to join Junot's which had entered Spain—was left on the confines of the Asturias and Old Castile; Lannes was placed in front of Saragossa, and Mortier, then at the Pyrenees, had orders to march on to Burgos. His left was covered by Ney's corps, called forward to Guadalajarra, his right by Bessières' cavalry which overran the plain as far as Segovia; and thus at every point he displayed to the Spaniards a force four times as strong as theirs. Starting from Aranda on November 28, he reached the foot of the Guadarrama on the 30th, with his guard, his reserve, and Victor's corps.

Don Benito San Juan, on whom devolved the duty of guarding the gorges of the Somo-Sierra with the remnants of the Estremadura army, had posted an advance guard at Sepulveda, consisting of three thousand men; but on the appearance of our troops they dispersed in different directions. He himself remained at Somo-Sierra with eight or nine thousand soldiers and sixteen guns, which swept the road. He had distributed his troops cleverly enough in rifle corps to the right and left of the route; but considering the number of assailants his arrange-

ments were none the less insufficient, as he had not even taken the necessary precautions for preventing our cavalry charges. Napoleon, after making a reconnaissance of the enemy's positions, sent some infantry regiments on the flank of the Spaniards, and dislodged their riflemen. When this infantry had, with some difficulty, cleared the immediate borders of the road, instead of attempting to take the battery in the centre by an assault that might have proved long and sanguinary, he resolved to capture it by means of the cavalry. General Montbrun, to whom this bold manœuvre was entrusted, executed it in a most dashing manner: he charged at full gallop, at the head of the Polish light horse, received a volley on the way which cost him some thirty men, but in a few moments reached the battery, put its gunners to the sword while standing beside their guns; and the Spaniards fled along the slopes of the Guadarrama in full retreat towards Segovia.

Madrid was now uncovered. The central junta, then at Aranjuez, precipitately quitted that town for Talavera, first sending to the capital the few troops and small resources still at their disposal. Far from seeming dejected by so many reverses the inhabitants of Madrid were determined to defend their town to the last extremity. They repaired their walls, unpaved their streets, put mattresses in the windows of their houses, dug ditches in front of the gates of the town, and cut trenches across their streets. The command of their forces they entrusted to Thomas de Morla, former Governor of Cadiz, who passed for an educated and experienced officer; they then enrolled their grown-up men as volunteers, and distributed arms and ammunition amongst them. Unfortunately these scenes of patriotic excitement were not altogether free from those acts of violence which so often accompany great popular emotions. Sand having been found instead of powder in some of the cartridges, the administrator, the Marquis de Perales, was accused at once, and though no evidence of his having manufactured them was forthcoming, he was seized by the people and assassinated.

On the 2nd of December, at early morn, the French army

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took up a position under the walls of the town, and Napoleon sent in a summons to open the gates. His proposal being received with contempt, he at once began preparations for an attack. The difficulty for him was not that of taking Madrid, for with the small means at their disposal the inhabitants of that town were absolutely incapable of making any serious defence, and our artillery alone was sufficient to reduce it to ashes; but he wished to avoid the odium of destroying so great a capital. It was a question, therefore, of leading them on to surrender by alternately employing menace and persuasion, and above all by demonstrating the inutility of resistance. On the 3rd of December, Sénarmont opened fire with thirty pieces of artillery against the Retiro, a position which completely commands the town, and of which the Spaniards did not understand the importance. At the same time their attention was drawn off to another side by several secondary attacks against the gates of Alcala, of the Recollets, of Atocha, and of Fuencarral. These were withstood with remarkable intrepidity by the citizens of Madrid, but our artillery opened a large breach in the Retiro, which was quickly taken by the Villate division, and many of the gates then falling into the hands of our troops, their defenders were forced to retire behind the barricades that closed the entrance to the streets.

The population wished to continue the combat, but their chiefs, better able to appreciate the uselessness of a long resistance, were discouraged, and answered a fresh summons from Napoleon by asking for an armistice which would allow the general excitement to subside. General de Morla and Don Bernardo Yriarte proceeded to head quarters in the hope of obtaining better conditions, but Napoleon overwhelmed them with reproaches, and above all attacked De Morla in unmeasured terms for his conduct after the Baylen affair: 'How dare you ask for a capitulation?' he exclaimed. 'You who have violated that of Baylen? To violate military treaties is to renounce all civilization: it is putting yourself on a level with the Bedouins of the desert!'[1] General de Morla might have

[1] Sixth bulletin from the army of Spain.

asked him in what manner military treaties, which, after all, only affect an army, could be more inviolable than diplomatic treaties that concern a whole nation, and which he was so fond of trampling under foot. He might have asked him if this strict *cultus*, based exclusively on military law, had always been respected by the man who now declared himself its apostle. But deeply troubled by these outbursts of anger in a man on whom his life depended and whom he knew to be capable of anything, he remained silent. Napoleon granted the Junta a delay of some hours to surrender. At six o'clock next morning he signed, with some slight modifications, the project of capitulation which the envoys brought him, and his army took possession of Madrid.

His troops had no sooner entered the town and disarmed the inhabitants, than he made haste to show in what respect he himself held those military treaties, the sanctity of which he had so loudly proclaimed. Making a pretext of some isolated acts of insubordination, impossible to prevent in a large capital, and especially amidst such agitation, he wrote to Belliard, who had been appointed Governor of Madrid, 'to ignore the capitulation throughout, since, as it had not been adhered to by the inhabitants, *it was null and void.*'[1] He notified to the officers and Spanish generals that they were prisoners of war, contrary to the terms of the capitulation, which stipulated (Article X) 'that those generals who might desire to remain in the capital should retain their honours, and that those who might not wish to remain should leave it without hindrance.' The Spanish troops, fortunately, had quitted Madrid during the night preceding the capitulation. He then abolished the Council of Castile, publicly branded its members as cowards and traitors, and imprisoned them, in violation of Article VI, by which he had engaged to maintain the laws, the customs and the *tribunals* in their existing form, until the definitive organization of the kingdom.' Finally, he sentenced to perpetual confinement the Prince of Castelfranco, the Marquis de Santa Cruz, and Count d'Altamira, in defiance of the most

[1] Napoleon to Belliard, December 5.

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formal clauses of the capitulation, on pretence of their having been included in the famous *decree of amnesty*. Those who had not been included in that decree were, however, no better protected from his vengeance; he condemned to death the Marquis de St. Simon, grandee of Spain, under pretext of his being a French emigrè. So universal, however, was the disapproval which this iniquitous sentence excited in his own camp, that he consented in the end to spare his life, and contented himself with sending him off to France with a number of other influential Spaniards, whose only crime was that of having remained faithful to the cause of their country.

Finding it useless any longer to favour the privileged classes whose acquiescence he had failed to win in spite of the advances he at first made to them, he at length inaugurated his programme for the regeneration of Spain by a series of dictatorial decrees.[1] One abolished feudal rights; another, the tribunal of the Inquisition; a third, the custom-house duties existing between the provinces; a fourth reduced the number of convents by one third. Excellent in themselves, these measures became odious even to those who most ardently desired them, from the mere fact of their being imposed by a foreign despot; and far from fulfilling their aim, the only effect they produced was to invest with a temporary popularity the classes and institutions which, under the reign of Charles III, had lost nearly all their influence.

Napoleon took up his quarters at Chamartin, the seat of the Duke of Infantado, one of those grandees whose property he had confiscated. He made a short visit to Madrid, but instead of the inhabitants evincing that curiosity which he was accustomed to see produced elsewhere by his appearance, the reception he met with was, to his extreme displeasure, of a frigid and hostile character. In place of running to look at the hero, the Spaniards shut themselves up in their houses. During this excursion he visited the palace of the kings of Spain, and, it is said, that amongst all the precious objects of art in the royal residence, that which fixed his attention most

[1] Dated December 4, 1808.

was the portrait of Philip II, by Velasquez. He gazed at it for a long time in silence, and as if he never could turn away from it; either because he was trying to penetrate the mystery of that living enigma, or perhaps was filled with an admiration mingled with envy for the inquisitorial king who exercised more absolute and more dreaded power even than his own. A few days afterwards he afforded the inhabitants of Madrid an opportunity of witnessing one of those military reviews which invariably attract crowds, but the performance took place in complete solitude. Such malignant and persevering indifference denoted an intractable population. Madrid, he felt, was decidedly a dangerous residence; and always attentive to his personal safety, the Emperor preferred the neighbourhood of his camp to contact with a capital which contained so many fanatics.

Joseph had followed in his brother's wake, with the baggage of the army. Although deeply humiliated by the obscure part he was made to play, he nevertheless had accompanied Napoleon to Chamartin; there, however, their disputes became so bitter that he was obliged to move to the Pardo. He still considered himself king of Spain, and in this capacity he claimed, not without some show of reason, to have a voice as to the manner in which his subjects should be brought back to their duty, and to give his opinion on measures of which he would have to bear all the responsibility. Napoleon, on the contrary, would recognise no rights but those of conquest; he was master either to keep them or to transmit them anew, and he even publicly stated in his manifestoes, 'that if the Spaniards did not respond to *his confidence*, no course would remain open to him but that of placing his brother upon another throne. He would then put the crown of Spain on his own head, and he would know how to make the *wicked* respect it, for God had given him the strength and the will to surmount every obstacle.'[1]

Underneath this personal question, which Joseph might have passed over, differences of a far more serious nature lay hidden, which were in fact the true cause of the coolness between the

[1] Proclamation of Dec. 7.

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two brothers. In spite of the rather artificial ambition with which Napoleon had inspired him, Joseph was of a humane and kind disposition. He wished no doubt to reign over the Spaniards, and, if need be, to conquer his kingdom; but he flattered himself that he could gain their hearts by clemency, gentleness and generosity. He had scruples in regard to honesty and justice, and no less faith in the ultimate triumph of inexhaustible good humour. It might perhaps be an illusion, but at least it was not the illusion of a madman. Joseph not only had a natural and sincere horror of the confiscations, exiles, imprisonments, and murders, which cost his brother so little, but he also considered them impolitic measures, fitted only to destroy his cause, and accordingly he wearied Napoleon with his protests. The Emperor shrugged his shoulders with pity when he had to listen to these complaints; no excess, no crime was repugnant to him for the purpose of subduing Spain; he was quite as Utopian in his cruelties, nevertheless, as Joseph was in his meekness, but as a question of one chimera or another that of Napoleon was far less practical, for each crime only increased the hatred of which he was the object.

It has been said that, in thus treating his brother as a cypher —and thus more than once exposing him to the derision of the army—Napoleon was only actuated by the magnanimous desire of taking all the odium of the conquest upon himself, and afterwards leaving to Joseph the honour of showing clemency, which would then have become easy. This fancy, so little answering to his character, is untenable in presence of the correspondence of King Joseph and the confidential communications of his friends. Napoleon did not require to be told that the Spaniards made his brother jointly responsible with him for all he did in Spain, a fact known to every one as well as to him. But Joseph's unceasing representations were a never-ending annoyance to him, hence the true reason why he would not allow him any real influence. At length, after the decrees of the 4th of December, matters came to such a pass that Joseph resolved to withdraw from a position which he considered dishonourable.

'Sire,' he wrote to Napoleon on December 8, 'M. d'Urquijo has communicated to me the legislative measures taken by your Majesty. Shame overpowers me in presence of my pretended subjects. I beseech your Majesty to accept my renunciation of all the rights you have given me to the throne of Spain. I shall always prefer honesty and probity to power so dearly purchased.'[1] This letter, so highly honourable to Joseph's memory, proves how Napoleon's policy was viewed, when seen on the spot, even by a brother and a witness whose interest it was to judge it leniently. Unfortunately, Joseph failed in determination; moreover, he was swayed by that passion, which, like a Nemesis, seizes and becomes ingrained in men who have once reigned; and he never had the strength of mind to persist in a resignation which he offered and retracted by turns, with equal signs of repentance.

In spite of his threats of dividing Spain into military viceroyalties and of governing it himself as a conquered province, Napoleon could not do without his brother, or at least not without his name to conceal his own authority. It was necessary, in fact, to leave to Spain the semblance of a national existence, were it only as the pretext of a rallying-point for those classes—everywhere numerous enough, but especially so in towns—whose dependent and precarious positions do not allow them the luxury of an opinion. In consequence, he announced his intention of re-instating Joseph on the throne of Spain, so soon as they should give him proofs of submission, and for this purpose he, in an underhand manner, instigated a proceeding on the part of the municipality and the heads of the clergy of Madrid. Nor was it difficult, impatient as were the Spaniards to be delivered from the onerous burden of a military occupation, to prevail upon them to come and ask for the restoration of a King who promised them some relief from their woes. They therefore presented themselves before Napoleon on the 15th of December, and implored of him, 'the favour of seeing King Joseph in Madrid, so that under his rule the capital and the whole of Spain might enjoy

[1] *Mémoires* of King Joseph, vol. v. See also the *Mémoires* of Miot de Melito, vol. iii.

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that tranquillity and happiness which they expected from the gentle disposition of His Majesty.'

In reply to this address Napoleon delivered a long defence of the reforms he had effected; he recalled those decrees for which the Spaniards had shown themselves so ungrateful, and enumerated the benefits that Spain was destined to reap from them. But what, he said, was altogether beyond his power, was to form a nation of the Spaniards under the orders of the King, if they continued to be imbued with a desire for separation from, and feelings of hatred against France. However, he would not refuse *to yield his rights of conquest to the King* and to establish him in Madrid, provided the inhabitants would manifest their sentiments of fidelity and give an example to the provinces. They must, therefore, prove the sincerity of their submission by '*taking an oath, which should not proceed from their lips alone, but likewise from their hearts, in presence of the Blessed Sacrament.*' In virtue of this conclusion, as singular as it was unexpected, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for several days in the churches of Madrid, and the people were there admitted to take the oath of allegiance to King Joseph. It is a never-ending source of astonishment to behold what a degree of confidence men have in the efficacy of an oath who, more than any others, have themselves most frequently broken it, and what simplicity they display in flattering themselves that a ceremony only used by themselves as a medium of deceit should be regarded as an irrevocable and sacred engagement by others.

If the Spaniards could have entertained the slightest illusion on the subject of the *liberal constitution* which, according to the Imperial allocution of December 15, was to be the reward of their docility, they had but to open the French *Moniteur* of the same date to learn the nature and extent of the liberties promised to them. The *Moniteur* of December 15, in fact, gave a definition, drawn by Napoleon himself, of the model régime he had bestowed on France, little likely to excite the envy of foreign nations. When, on the receipt of some flags taken from the enemy, the Legislative Body deputed some of

its members to convey an address of congratulation to the Empress, Josephine replied, 'I am very pleased that the Emperor's first thought, after victory, should have been for *the Body that represents the nation.*' Napoleon had been much irritated previously by a slight opposition manifested in this assembly to an article of the *Code* of criminal instruction. He had bitterly complained that, 'instead of voting by ballot against the law, the opponents of the measure had neglected to demand a secret committee in which each one should state his opinion,—a process which would enable him to see *by the reports if they had been right or wrong.*'[1] The Emperor for the first time regretted the silence to which he had condemned them, now that he perceived how this muteness foiled any attempt at denunciation on his part. It was too soon to forget that these parliamentary reports had been a source of unhappiness to the speakers; but the members of the Legislative Body were blessed with better memories.

On being informed that the Empress had treated men as representatives of the nation who had not dared to give a reason for their votes, so completely had he lowered and degraded them, Napoleon gave way to one of those outbursts of anger in which he indulged whenever the rights he had usurped were appealed to before him. The *Moniteur* recalled the deputies to a sense of their nothingness and made the thunder roll over their humbled heads. 'Her Majesty the Empress *never said that,*' this peremptory notice affirmed; 'she knows our constitution too well; she knows too well that *the first representative of the nation is the Emperor.* In the order of our constitution, the Senate comes after the Emperor, the Council of State after the Senate, the Legislative Body after the Council of State. . . . . The Convention and the Legislative Assembly were representative; such was our constitution at that time; and the president even disputed precedence with the King. . . . . Now *it would be an absurd and even a criminal pretension, to seek to represent the nation as prior to the Emperor.* The Legislative Body, inappropriately designated by this name,

[1] Napoleon to Talleyrand, November 27, 1808.

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ought to be called the Legislative Council, for, having no right to propose laws, it has no right to make them. *It is nothing but a reunion of mandatories from the electoral Councils.*'

In truth the essential features of that constitution which he wished to uphold to all Europe as an immovable and absolute type of perfection consisted in a servile and trembling Senate composed of his creatures, a Council of State composed of active and docile instruments, a Legislative Body reduced to the *rôle* of a registry Chamber, and, towering above all these phantoms, a man, the representative of the nation, tribune and dictator in one, invested with the triple power of constituting, legislating and governing. It was no small matter to have so quickly made this degrading theory a reality in the full light of Christian civilisation, and in the middle of an enlightened age; but, to propose it thus for the admiration of mankind was rather overstepping all bounds; for, although the Cæsarism of the proceeding might have been accepted as a sad and temporary necessity, yet no one could regard it as a normal or lasting system. The author of this anachronism alone seriously believed in his dream, he alone thought of carrying out to the end this exhumation of everything belonging to the decline of the Roman Empire. His thoughts lived in that narrow circle and could not quit it; he revived its names, its institutions, its manners; he sought for analogies to it to such a degree that he never could speak even of Dupont's disaster without comparing it with that of *Sabinus Titurius*; in short, he dwelt with delight in those fearful ages, the remembrance of which is a nightmare to every free-minded man. Even at the very time that he was letting so many scourges loose upon unfortunate Spain, he sent Cambacérès a plan—with an inconsistency only suited to the brain of a demented Cæsar—for a *temple of Janus*, to be built on the summit of Montmartre, *and where the first solemn announcement of peace should be made.*[1] It seemed to him, that the erection of a temple of Peace, at the time when he was doubling the conscription by bringing it up to a hundred and sixty thousand men, ought

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, November 26, 1808.

to be an unanswerable proof to every Frenchman of his conciliatory intentions; and so far, it must be confessed, he had not presumed too much on the credulity of a people who are led by words. This temple was to cost from twenty to thirty millions. As this large amount might injure the popularity of the monument, Napoleon hit upon the equally Roman idea of levying it exclusively from the class of electors which then numbered no more than thirty or forty thousand active members. By this new means he calculated on imposing a sum varying from one to three thousand francs on each of these *Curiales*.

Napoleon had now been about twenty days at Madrid, but had taken no steps as yet to defeat the English army. Certain it is that, if he had marched according to his usual method, a few days after his arrival in the capital, straight after the English in pursuance of his victory, he would have placed Moore's army in the greatest danger. It was not until the first days of December that the latter received his artillery and cavalry, brought to him by his lieutenant, Hope, from the valley of the Tagus across the mountain chain separating the two Castiles, and he had not yet been able to effect his junction with General Baird. Moore was a chief, prudent as well as brave; he was adored by his army, and his most severe judges have never reproached him with any fault but too great a distrust of himself. He had experienced those disappointments in Spain which await a commander in the midst of an unorganised insurrection. At Salamanca he learned, one after the other, all the disasters of the Spanish army. Profoundly discouraged by the disorder, want of discipline, and inertness of the auxiliaries he had counted upon, irritated by their alternate boasting and dejection, too weak, moreover, with his twenty thousand men, to undertake any serious enterprise himself against an army of such superior strength, Moore, a prey to the most painful perplexity,[1] at first decided on quitting his advanced post at Salamanca and retreating into Portugal, leaving an order for Sir David Baird to retire to Corunna. Soon afterwards, however,

[1] Proof of this is to be found in every page of his correspondence and of his journal.

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at the request of the Spanish generals and of Frere, British Envoy to the central junta, he consented to march to Valladolid, to the intense joy of his soldiers, who were longing to fight,[1] and with the view of making a diversion in favour of the insurgents of the West and South. But in thus deciding to attract Napoleon's forces towards himself in the North, he was obliged to sacrifice his communications with Portugal and to change his line of retreat, which henceforward should be directed towards Corunna instead of Lisbon.

In his march to Valladolid, Sir John Moore intercepted a message from Napoleon to Soult ordering him to go to Leon and to drive back Romana's corps into Galicia. In consequence of this information Moore turned a little to the left on the road from Toro to Benevente to support his allies against Soult, and on the 20th of December he effected his junction with Baird at Majorga, which brought his forces up to five and twenty thousand men.[2] Happily for us Soult had remained in the neighbourhood of Carrion, and he was enabled to retire before the English, who advanced as far as Sahagun. (December 22.)

Such then was the situation of the English army when Napoleon decided on attacking it. The number of his troops in the Peninsula had gone on increasing, as Junot's and Mortier's army-corps advanced, one upon Burgos, the other on Saragossa, where it was to reinforce Moncey; our soldiers had even gained some fresh advantages over the Spaniards, and yet, far from our embarrassments being over in the Peninsula, they seemed to be recommencing. The submission of Madrid had produced anger and indignation in the provinces. The armies of the insurrection, though repulsed on so many points, seemed to recruit themselves by flight as ours did by victory. Every one who escaped alive from the field of battle

[1] *Story of the Peninsular War*, by the Marquis of Londonderry.

[2] This amount is certain, allowing for deduction of the troops left in Portugal or at Lugo, and of the sick in the hospitals. It is taken from the *official return of Moore's army*, dated December 19, 1808, inserted in the *History of the Peninsular War*, by Napier.

enrolled himself sooner or later over again. In a short time there was not a single Spaniard capable of bearing arms who had not served successively in five or six different armies. By death would it alone be possible to subdue the country, and Napoleon did not shrink from this very logical consequence of his enterprise. But it was not easy to put it into practice with an enemy so clever at stealing away. In this manner an army reappeared in a few days of which the bulletins had announced *the total destruction*. Blake's army, annihilated at Espinosa, now numbered ten thousand men in Castile and almost as many in the Asturias under Romana. That of Palafox, shut up in Saragossa, held two corps, those of Moncey and Mortier, in check; Castaños and his division, so closely pursued at Sigüenza, had fallen back on Cuenca in strong positions under the Duke of Infantado, and his numbers increased perceptibly; finally, that of Estremadura, on the point of breaking up from the result of its own excesses after Somosierra, and disgraced by the murder of its general, San Juan, had been restored to order by Galuzzo, who occupied Almaraz on the Tagus.

This fresh state of uncertainty, after successes which had apparently been so decisive, was perhaps in reality the true cause of Napoleon's delay in assuming the offensive. Accustomed to close in upon his adversaries and thus destroy them, he felt somewhat disconcerted by the evasive ways of an enemy that disappeared the moment he tried to catch him. At any rate, having been informed on the 19th of December that the English were marching on Valladolid, he understood by that alone that their line of retreat must have been changed, and almost instantly detected Moore's plan. 'Everything leads me to believe,' he states in a note left for Joseph, 'that they are evacuating Portugal and directing their line of operation on Corunna. But in making this retrograde movement they may hope to inflict a check on Marshal Soult's corps.'[1]

This latter idea was, it is true, a most natural temptation for one in the position of Sir John Moore, who might otherwise find himself obliged to retreat without an engagement; and

[1] Notes for Joseph, dated December 22, 1808.

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Napoleon hoped that he might yield to it. If so, we should have had time to attack his communications and to cut him off from Corunna. The Emperor had eighty thousand men in the neighbourhood of Madrid. Half of these he took with him, and the other half he left with Joseph[1], after having fortified the Retiro and converted it into a regular entrenched camp. Joseph kept Lefebvre's and Victor's corps with two divisions of cavalry—quite sufficient to repulse any attack—while the Emperor took with him Ney's corps, the Imperial Guard, and strong reserves of artillery and cavalry. The defeat of the English seemed, in his opinion, certain, and there is no doubt that they would have had the greatest difficulty in escaping, if they had allowed themselves to be placed between these forty thousand men and Soult's corps. 'I am starting this moment,' he wrote to Josephine on December 22. 'I am going to outmanœuvre the English, who appear to have received their reinforcements and *wish to play the swaggerers*. The weather is fine, my health perfect—do not be uneasy.'

On the evening of that same day he crossed the Guadarrama on foot, amidst a fearful snowstorm. The weather, hitherto so fine, had become bad, but had no effect in slackening the rapidity of our movements. On December 25, Napoleon was at Tordesillas, not far from Valladolid, thoroughly convinced that he was about to surprise and capture the English army: 'Have it put into the newspapers,' he wrote to Joseph, 'that 36,000 English are surrounded, that I am in their rear, while Soult is in their front.'[2] A few days afterwards it was necessary to change the tune.

Warned by Romana of Napoleon's march, Sir John Moore, who was at that moment preparing to move towards Saldañba, there to attack Soult (December 23), at once saw the necessity of immediately retreating if he wished to avoid being caught between two fires. He managed the matter with as much skill as

[1] Notes for Joseph, dated December 22, 1808. On this point it is necessary to reduce Napier's calculations, generally so just. He asserts that Napoleon led an army of 50,000 men against Moore.

[2] To Joseph, December 27, 1808.

decision. His most direct road to Corunna was the Mansilla route, but it was so encumbered by the equipages of the Spanish army that he retrograded quickly to Benevente, there blew up the bridges on the Ezla, and commenced his retreat to Astorga (December 26). Our advanced guard was still at Medina de Rio-Seco. Moore hurried on his troops, leaving a cavalry corps at Benevente under Lord Paget to keep off ours. When Lefebvre-Desnoettes approached that town with his light horse, he found the bridges broken, and made four squadrons ford the Ezla. They were met and put to the sword by the enemy's cavalry, and Lefebvre himself was made prisoner just as he was on the point of being drowned in the river.

Napoleon was obliged to acknowledge that his calculations had been baffled. Instead of cutting them off he could now do nothing but pursue the English on their line of retreat. His ill-humour vented itself in abuse. 'The English had not only destroyed the bridges, but they had blown them up by undermining them with powder, *barbarous conduct*, most unusual in war! Consequently they were looked upon with horror throughout the country.' We here see how scrupulous this great man became with regard to barbarism, when he passed judgment on the conduct of his adversaries. But the real barbarism which he could least pardon them was having escaped his clutches. Since he had lost all hope of taking them, their army no longer consisted of 36,000 men, but of 25,000. 'Their real strength,' he wrote, 'is from twenty to twenty-one thousand infantry, and from four to five thousand cavalry.' And he added; 'they owe a debt of gratitude to the obstacles presented to us by the passage of the Guadarrama and the *infamous mud* we have encountered!' The mud of Poland had passed into a proverb, thanks to the bulletins, but the mud of Spain was an invention rather more difficult to credit.

The chief difficulty of Moore's retreat henceforth arose less from the pursuit of the French army than from the absence of provisions and the bad state of the roads. Our cavalry, commanded by Bessières, pressed him closely, but Ney's corps had barely reached Benevente, when the English had already

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passed beyond Astorga. Soult advanced rapidly from the moment that he defeated a Spanish rear guard at Mansilla, to whom was assigned the defence of that passage; but he was not strong enough to risk any serious engagement with the English, although he did them much harm by harassing them unceasingly. As far as Villafranca, their sufferings, though great, were endurable. But when they had to cross the snow-clad mountains which separate Villafranca from Lugo, provisions almost entirely failed. In order to procure them they were obliged to burst open houses, and the army soon fell into indescribable disorder. On the road they left drunken men, wounded and stragglers who were too weak to go on farther, amongst these latter a number of women and children; the baggage was abandoned and destroyed as it could not be carried; more than £30,000 in gold was thrown over the precipices; they slaughtered horses by hundreds because they could no longer feed them; in short, they escaped complete destruction, solely by a march of extraordinary rapidity, which enabled the army to extricate itself quickly from these terrible defiles and to recruit its strength at Lugo (January 5, 1809). Hitherto Moore had been undecided whether to choose Corunna or Vigo for his line of retreat; but at Lugo he saw the necessity of fixing upon Corunna, as it would afford him greater facilities for embarkation.[1] Napoleon had halted at Astorga. He has himself, in a letter of that period, assigned as reason for so doing, that by following the movements of his army further, he should have found himself at twenty days' distance from Paris. On the other hand, rumours current in the army stated, that after having received and read his despatches on the 2nd of January at Astorga, he had remained sunk in deep thought for some moments, and then had given orders of departure for Benevente, without communicating with any one. Hence sprung the very generally received opinion that news of a grave nature had reached him that day, which obliged him to return to France. Without disputing the truth of the little scene of reading the

[1] Letter from Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore to Viscount Castlereagh, January 13, 1809: Ann. Reg.

despatches, which is attested by trustworthy witnesses, we believe that Napoleon's decision ought to be attributed to very different motives. In the first place no new incident had occurred either in France or in Europe, which could have caused this change. Austria, it is true, was continuing to arm as she had been doing for several months past, but she was still far from being ready to commence war. As to the influence assigned to Fouché's and Talleyrand's intrigues, the hypothesis rests simply on unimportant gossip. Nothing was going on in Paris which could give Napoleon the slightest uneasiness. No! His real motive in halting was, that he no longer perceived any way of hindering the embarkation of the English. The decisive blow which he had announced with so much clamour had failed, and he did not care to go forty or fifty leagues further, over horrible roads, merely to witness their escape and to bring back as the only trophy of so toilsome an expedition three or four thousand stragglers vanquished by fatigue rather than by the sword. He left this unenviable kind of success to Marshals Soult and Ney, and returned himself to Valladolid.

Sir John Moore had quitted Lugo on the evening of the 8th of January, after having in vain offered battle to Soult during two consecutive days. On the 11th he reached Corunna and thus approached the termination of that difficult retreat which he had conducted with so much firmness and prudence. An overwhelming surprise there awaited him. The ships for the embarkation of his troops had not yet arrived. He received the news without flinching, and made every preparation for giving battle to the French, who had happily been delayed on the road. On the 14th of January, Moore's transports appeared in sight off Corunna. Then, emerging from his state of inactivity, Soult endeavoured to oppose the embarkation of the English. He engaged them in a long and sanguinary combat during the whole of the 16th, but never succeeded in taking a single one of their positions. The English embarked their last man before leaving Corunna, but their two generals, Moore and Baird, were wounded, one mortally and the other

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severely, at the very moment that the deliverance of that army was effected which they had saved by their perseverance and courage. 'You know,' said Moore to his friend Colonel Anderson, just as he was about to expire, 'you know that I always wished to die thus . . . I hope the English people will be content!'[1]

Napoleon had left Valladolid for Paris on the 17th of January, 1809, without even waiting to hear the result of Soult's and Ney's pursuit. So far back as the 1st of January he had foreseen that he could not succeed in preventing the embarkation of the English; that was the real motive of this sudden resolve to go no further. All that has been written on this question as to the pretended possibility of overtaking them on the road, and the fault committed by the two Marshals in favouring the enemy's flight by their slowness, falls to the ground before the simple words addressed to Soult in the Emperor's name by Major-General Berthier, on the 1st of January, 1809: 'Marshal!' he writes: 'The Emperor, foreseeing the embarkation of the English, has dictated instructions for the last operations of the Duke of Elchingen and yourself. He commands that, *when the English shall have embarked*, you shall march on Oporto, &c.'[2] When the Emperor admitted that he looked upon this retreat as an 'accomplished fact,' so long before it had been effected, it necessarily follows not only that it was very probable, but that it had a thousand chances to one in its favour.

Nothing was definitely settled in Spain when he chose to return to France. The English army sailed away from Corunna, but it was very probable that it would return by sea to Portugal where it had left a detachment of nearly ten thousand men. This direction had also been taken by Romana's army, which though suffering severely had not been destroyed. At other points of the Peninsula resistance was far

[1] J. C. Moore: *Life of Sir John Moore.* Lord Londonderry: *Story of the Peninsular War.* Southey: *History,* &c. Napier: *Histoire de la Guerre de la Péninsule,* translation and notes by General Mathieu Dumas, &c.

[2] Berthier's despatch to Soult. Memoirs of King Joseph.

from being crushed. Lannes had undertaken the direction of the siege of Saragossa. He carried it on with cool and inflexible energy, but nothing as yet indicated that he would conquer the indomitable resolution of its inhabitants. That town alone occupied two of our army corps, those of Moncey and Mortier. On the other hand Victor had defeated the army of the Duke of Infantado at Ucles and driven it back on Valencia, but there was little gained by this success. Saint-Cyr, who had entered Catalonia in the beginning of November, had succeeded in raising the blockade at Barcelona, by means of one of those methodical and scientific campaigns in which he excelled, but although he had beaten the Catalonians in several encounters, he was far from having subdued that province. Andalusia, in fine, so fatal to our arms, was still intact, as well as nearly the whole of the South of Spain. In one word we had, so far, done nothing but traverse the country as conquerors, without establishing ourselves solidly in any part of it; and while we crushed the revolt on one point, it broke forth immediately on another.

Taking for granted that the subjugation of the Peninsula was feasible even by Napoleon's genius, and by employing all the resources at his command, it was essentially a work of patience and of abnegation, one that promised neither grandiose and striking effects, nor any immediate results. It was an undertaking which could not be successfully carried out without a mixture of gentleness and severity, requiring, at the same time, slow and skilful measures; above all demanding great perseverance, calmness and wisdom; in short, something very much like that pacification of La Vendée which had done such honour to General Hoche, but presenting far greater difficulties from the number of the population, the extent of the country and the intensity of the national hatred. Nothing was more antipathetic to Napoleon's natural character than such a *rôle*, or more at variance, especially, with the good and bad qualities which success had developed in him. This patient and delicate task was not compatible either with his theatrical manners, with the violent sallies of his despotic temper, nor with the

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impresision which he wished to convey of his omnipotence and infallibility. He resolved, therefore, to leave it to his lieutenants, certain that in case of success he would reap all the honour, and in case of failure on them alone would fall the responsibility.

In order to give a colouring in the eyes of Europe to his return to Paris, which it was difficult to account for after those manifestoes in which he had so pompously announced *that he was going to plant his eagles on the towers of Lisbon*, he wrote under date from Valladolid itself on the eve of his departure, a series of most bellicose circulars to the Princes of the Germanic Confederation.

Having no fresh fact with which to reproach Austria, yet wishing at the same time to attribute his departure to provocation on the part of that power, he made use of articles that had been published by the newspapers of Vienna and Presburg, to prescribe to his Confederates a menacing attitude towards the Court of Vienna. He announced to them, that without withdrawing one single man from his army in Spain, he was ready to move towards the Inn with 150,000 men. He told them to prepare their contingents: 'Russia,' added he, adroitly, 'is indignant at the extravagant conduct of Austria. This spirit of giddiness and folly,—the forerunner of the ruin of states,—is inconceivable to us. Can it be that the waters of the Danube have acquired the property of those of Lethe?'

He fancied that he might indulge in this provocation without bringing on immediate war, which he wished to begin at an hour of his own choosing. It was clear that he intended to avenge himself upon Austria for the doubtful success he had achieved in Spain. His prestige, so seriously injured by Baylen and Cintra, could not be restored amid the slow proceedings and long uncertainties of the Peninsular War. He determined, therefore, to re-establish it at the expense of Austria, now so long accustomed to be beaten. Insensibly, he adopted the same policy towards Spain which he had done with regard to England; and was beginning to say to himself that he would defeat Spain in Europe.

Before quitting the Peninsula he left Joseph some political and military instructions. The military contained the plan of a campaign in Portugal and in Andalusia, but the political instructions were much more summary and greatly simplified since the check he had experienced in his reforms. The burthen of their song was of a most sinister description, and was repeated in all Napoleon's letters to Joseph at this period: 'I am not pleased with the Madrid police;' he wrote to him on the 10th of January from Valladolid; 'Belliard is too weak; with the Spaniards it is necessary to be more severe. *I have had fifteen of the worst arrested here and shot.* Have about thirty of them arrested at Madrid. *When they are treated with kindness, the rabble think themselves invulnerable. When a few of them are hung, they begin to take a dislike to the game and grow humble and submissive as they ought to be.*'[1]

On the 12th of January he reverts to these recommendations, and expresses his satisfaction that Belliard had begun to put them into practice: 'Belliard's *operation* is excellent. *It is essential to hang about twenty of the worst characters at Madrid.* To-morrow I shall have seventeen hung, amongst those most known for every sort of excess. . . . Unless Madrid is freed from some hundred of these firebrands, nothing will have been done. *Of these hundred have some twelve or fifteen hung or shot and send the rest to the galleys.* I had no peace in France, nor did I restore confidence amongst people of property, until I had two hundred of the firebrands and assassins of September arrested and sent off to the colonies. From that time forward the feeling in the capital changed as if by magic.'[2]

On the 16th of January he again laid down these precepts of lofty policy, the better to impress them upon the gentle-hearted Joseph. 'The Court of the Alcades of Madrid has acquitted, or only condemned to imprisonment, some thirty of those scoundrels whom Belliard had arrested: *a military*

[1] Letter inserted in the Memoirs of King Joseph, but not reproduced in Napoleon's *Correspondance*.

[2] Memoirs of King Joseph.

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commission must be appointed to try them again and to have the guilty shot. . . . Here, every effort has been made in vain to obtain mercy for the bandits that were condemned. I refused it, *I insisted on the hanging, and I was convinced that in the bottom of their hearts the petitioners were very glad not to have been listened to.* I believe it necessary, especially at first, that your government should show a little vigour with this rabble. The rabble like and respect only those whom they fear; and fear of the rabble can alone make you loved and respected by the whole nation.'[1]

Finally, he desired him to take out of the convents and houses that were confiscated at Madrid, some fifty of the masterpieces of the Spanish school, which were wanting, he said, to the collection in the Museum of Paris.[2]

The advice contained in these fraternal effusions constituted in reality the whole programme of the Imperial and Royal policy. Such was Napoleon's farewell to the people whom he declared himself called upon to *regenerate!*

[1] Memoirs of King Joseph.

[2] Napoleon to Joseph, January 15.

CHAPTER XII.

RUPTURE WITH AUSTRIA. BATTLE OF THE FIVE DAYS. SECOND CAPTURE OF VIENNA. ESSLING. (*February—May*, 1809.)

HAVING started from Valladolid on the 17th of January, 1809, the Emperor arrived at the Tuileries on the 23rd of the same month. It has often been repeated that the intrigues at Paris contributed, quite as much as the armaments of Austria, to this sudden return, which took every one by surprise. Such at least were the pretexts which he was pleased to allege in explanation of his abrupt departure from the Peninsula; but whoever seriously believes interpretations which it suited him to give of his conduct, must have but a false conception of his character. His true motives could not be mentioned by Napoleon. He could not confess that he, who in eight days had destroyed the military power of Prussia, felt humbled, nay, exasperated, by having spent nearly three months in Spain without having been able to subdue a resistance he never spoke of but with the utmost contempt. In fact, it was nothing more than a repetition of his conduct in leaving Boulogne, accompanied by less impatience to make war, no doubt, yet by an equal desire to seem to be provoked to it. The false appearances, however, of which he so cleverly knew how to avail himself in order to seem constrained to quit a country which he was longing to leave, do not bear close investigation. Austria's preparations were proceeding but slowly; aggression on her part, which

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Napoleon was hastening by his own threats, was far from being imminent, and the pretended intrigues in Paris soon dwindled down into inoffensive gossip.

There had been, it is true, as happened every time the Emperor left France, rather more liberty in conversation, and rather less timidity amongst the discontented. In spite of that Chinese wall which his policy had erected round France, a few rays of light had eventually illumined those events in Spain which he wished to envelope in impenetrable obscurity; and the public, too demoralised to condemn them as they deserved, nevertheless ventured to criticise an enterprise which success did not seem to sanction. The great mass of the people certainly began to complain of the conscriptions by which they were decimated, but there their grievances ended. A few of the high functionaries of the Empire, uneasy at seeing their positions thus endangered, joined these critics, albeit discreetly, others discussed the inevitable question as to what should be done if the Emperor were to fall in Spain; a forethought that was only natural, in view of the implacable hatreds that existed amongst the Imperial family.

But these murmurs had little echo outside the coteries of the *salons*. At that time there was neither press nor parliament to give them the publicity they ought to have had. The Legislative Body was, no doubt, assembled, but although little satisfied with the state of affairs, it never raised its voice except to give utterance to base adulation. By observing it very closely, however, an almost imperceptible symptom of its secret dissatisfaction might be discerned in the somewhat considerable number of opposition votes with which the project for the code of criminal-instruction had been received. It was sufficiently courageous one day to reject an article of law, but immediately retired frightened at its own temerity.

In addition to this great event another incident was noted, of no less menacing a nature, according to the opinion of certain alarmists interested in making a show of their zeal. This was the reconciliation which had taken place been Fouché and Talleyrand, who had been open enemies for a long time past. These

two personages were not exactly the sort of men to allow themselves to be taken unawares by events, and they therefore had held many long conversations. They perceived the necessity of a good understanding, and of concerting some common plan of action in case of the Emperor's death; and it was asserted that Murat, Napoleon's own brother-in-law, had before starting for Naples approved of all their plans, in the hope of profiting by them at some future day through his popularity in the army.[1] Nothing was more probable than that confidential communications of the kind should have been exchanged between men desirous of preserving their great political position, and who all had had more or less cause to complain of the Emperor's behaviour. They were naturally suggested by the dangers of the present and the uncertainty of the future; and were merely a feeble repetition of what had been discussed under similar circumstances at the period of Marengo, of Eylau, and even of Austerlitz. But these confidences had not gone beyond the limits of private conversation, and unless he had declared himself immortal, it is impossible to see how Napoleon could pretend to prohibit them. In fact, their authors were so far from dreaming of their ever coming into operation during Napoleon's lifetime, that the one who would have to act the principal part, King Murat, was actually at Naples—a spot singularly ill-chosen for conspiring at Paris.

The very importance which was assigned to this idle gossip of the anti-chamber proves how few acts of any serious nature could be brought forward; and, if Napoleon made so much noise about it, it was because, at that moment, he required to find fault at any cost with some one or other, in order to palliate the injurious effect of his precipitate return. Amongst the many suggestions he borrowed from the age of the Cæsars, he had taken care not to forget that of informers. The system of denunciation was one of the great springs of the Imperial régime; it was declared to be the duty of every official of the

[1] On this subject see, in the *Journal* of Stanislaus Girardin, a conversation with the Empress Josephine, under date of February 24, 1809, evidently recorded on the day itself.

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Empire, from the senator to obscure members of the University.[1] The Emperor, moreover, employed many of the police, principally in informing upon each other. Fouchè, whose office it was to watch over others, was himself more closely watched than any one. The Emperor, therefore, soon knew in its minutest detail the secret of the reconciliation effected between his Minister of Police and his Grand Chamberlain. He reached Paris in that state of bad humour, or rather of sullen wrath, in which he had been ever since the day when he found himself forced to relinquish all hope of capturing the English army. This temper had betrayed itself at Valladolid by torrents of invectives against the Spaniards, against his generals, his soldiers, and even his own brother. His feelings, therefore, being in accord with his schemes, which urged him to mark his return by some striking effects, it cost him no effort to appear at Paris as an irritated master in the midst of trembling servants.

Finding it difficult, however, to bring formal accusations against these two men without proofs, he confined himself to censuring the general tendency of their political conduct, and referring to facts of public notoriety, such as the remarks Talleyrand had made on the question of the war in Spain. In a council composed of the ministers and grand dignitaries he reproached Fouché with the respect he purposely showed to partisans of the old régime, the little vigour of his administration, and the almost factious direction he imprinted on public opinion; for, from the fact of his own success in the art of deceiving nations, Napoleon had come to look upon opinion as a force, the movements of which could be regulated by governments as they pleased. Public opinion in his estimation had a kind of current value, which ought to be manufactured at the Prefecture of Police. That branch of the administration, having all news, both home and foreign, under its control over the entire surface of the Empire, besides information of every

[1] This obligation was inscribed in the Statutes of the University (Art. 46). For the part concerning the senators see the third volume.

sort, and journals wherein to propagate it; having, moreover, not only the sovereign power of altering facts, but also of inventing them at will, it followed that a public opinion which was merely the result of information derived from all these combined sources could be nothing but a production manipulated by the police. This reasoning was most correct, but it presupposed one very essential element besides, namely, the faith of the public in the sources of the information thus transmitted to them. That faith, however, had by this time been much shaken.

The worst part of the storm fell upon Talleyrand. Ever since he had been so singularly invested with 'the honourable mission of surrounding with pleasures and surveillance' the dethroned Spanish Princes, the Grand Chamberlain had more and more severely condemned the Spanish affair, in which he found himself henceforth implicated against his will by so vexatious a share. All his reasons for disapproving of an enterprise which was repugnant to his good sense, if not to his morality, had been lately added to by a personal disgrace calculated to embitter a mind so sensitive to ridicule. According to a rumour then widely circulated in Paris, it was believed that although Talleyrand had accepted the mission of amusing his guests at Valençay most reluctantly, Madame de Talleyrand had entered into it warmly, and had seconded the Emperor's intentions far beyond her husband's wishes. This rumour, whether true or false, had not contributed to reconcile Talleyrand to plans he had never approved of except under constraint, and, according to his habit, he had revenged himself for his misfortune by some of those charming *mots* in which wit was only so much grace added to sound sense. Napoleon, in violent language, called him to account for these remarks and for other expressions of censure attributed to him; he reminded him, not without exaggeration, of the part he had taken in the negotiations with Izquierdo, and reproached him with having dared to blame the execution of the Duc d'Enghien after having counselled it. Did he go so far as to accuse him of having *counselled it in writing?* There is no testimony relative to this famous scene

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but the recollections gathered from the conversations of the Duke of Gaeta,[1] which is most insufficient as authority. Until it is proved that the phrase was ever pronounced, it cannot be right to cite it as an irrefragable proof of Talleyrand's complicity in the murder of the Duc d'Enghien. Even supposing that Talleyrand had acted a part in that tragedy which was contrary both to his character and his interests, he was not such a novice as to leave proof of it in writing; nor, had such writing existed, was Napoleon the man to let it go out of his hands.

But even if the words attributed to Napoleon really were spoken, they constitute testimony of very little value, if it be borne in mind that the slightest protest on Talleyrand's part would have ruined him irremediably, without in any way availing towards his justification. How could he have defended himself against the man who accused him? Before what tribunal could he summon him for calumny? He knew, on the other hand, what dangers he might create for himself even by a simple denial. To brave them would have required courage such as Napoleon's most valiant generals rarely showed themselves capable of. Talleyrand remained silent. He received a volley of reproaches, mingled with menaces and insulting expressions, without a word in reply—with that cold impassibility which was his manner of evincing dignity. Imperturbable and careful to give no opportunity which, in his anger, might be grasped at by his powerful adversary, he studied only to avoid the danger without trying to argue with him, as a man does when battling with one of the elements, and thus could have conquered and surveyed him from the lofty eminence of his calm bearing. When all was ended he made a low bow and walked away. Napoleon, who struck him at the moment with pleasure, experienced a sort of moral impossibility of doing so with advantage after a scene which filled with consternation those who witnessed it. He con-

[1] Especially by Meneval and Thiers. Gaudin, moreover, was not present at the scene any more than Mollier, who also speaks of it from hearsay in his *Mémoirs d'un Ministre du Trésor* (tom. iii). Mollier does not say a word of the accusation relative to the Duc d'Enghien.

tented himself with depriving Talleyrand of his key as Grand Chamberlain and giving it to M. de Montesquiou, but the eminent diplomatist none the less kept his appointment of Vice-Grand Elector. He concealed his vexation beneath an outward semblance of perfect ease, seemed to retain no recollection of the insults aimed at him, and presented himself again at the Tuileries in an attitude that was submissive certainly, but at the same time, neither one of constraint nor of zeal, as if he felt that the Court could not exist without him, and that he was born a great dignitary, indispensable to the country, if not to the Emperor.

Fouché retained his functions as Minister of Police, for it would not have been easy to replace this precious man. He had the advantage over his younger competitors of having betrayed every party since 1793, and he began to meditate the addition of one more act of treachery to his state services. Failing to reach him, the Imperial thunder fell upon a woman who was attached to the new régime by her appointment at Court, and to the old by her ancient lineage. Madame de Chevreuse had once escaped exile owing to Talleyrand's intervention, then all powerful; now she was included in the disgrace of her protector, and ordered to banish herself to the distance of forty leagues from Paris. She was accused of having indulged in some feminine witticisms, and of having refused to fulfil the duties of Lady of Honour to the former Queen of Spain. 'Let the de Luynes take care!' exclaimed the Emperor on this occasion. 'If they annoy me, I will revise the confiscation of Marshal d'Ancre's property, and heirs shall not be wanting to claim his spoils from them!' As to Murat, protected by distance, he only felt a weak rebound of the master's anger. Champagny was desired to reprimand him on the subject of the decorations belonging to the order of the two Sicilies, which he had permitted himself to confer upon Frenchmen without the authority of the Emperor, 'which was *supremely ridiculous*.'[1] The Minister at the same time had to enjoin this sovereign

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, January 24, 1809.

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instantly to send back to France those whom he had enrolled in the order.

Having thus gratified his ill humour, his resentment, and his offended pride, he grew impatient to prepare for that war which he had rendered almost inevitable. In fact, even if Napoleon had sincerely wished to prevent it, which he did not, it was very late to recede after the irritating demonstrations which had filled to the brim the measure of the old or the more recent grievances of the Cabinet of Vienna. The circular addressed to the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine was one of those direct menaces beneath which no power can bend without losing all influence and all prestige. Austria, moreover, was the more sensitive to this threat because it was the last limit to a long series of humiliations, and because the Court of Vienna had done nothing to provoke it. She had, no doubt, continued to arm noiselessly, with a view to placing herself in a military point on a level with all her neighbours,—a step the right and necessity of which she had justly asserted; but in doing this she had never transgressed her privileges as an independent power, nor could she be reproached with any proceeding which could have caused the manifestoes from Valladolid. Napoleon himself was now forced to admit to his confidants the falsity of his accusations. Immediately on his return to Paris he wrote to Eugène that '*Austria is not making the movements which we supposed;* however, one must be on the alert!'[1] 'Which we supposed,' meant to say, such as it pleased him to suppose when he wanted a pretext for leaving Spain. But, whether just or not, the provocation had been given, and it was necessary to sustain it; above all, the appearance of the first wrongs should be thrown upon Austria, and in that particular Napoleon excelled.

Amongst historical commonplaces there is hardly one so widely diffused as that which imputes the responsibility of the war of 1809 to 'mad aggression on the part of Austria;' nor is there perhaps any one more false or unwarrantable. The Emperor Napoleon knew perfectly well, that, in the opinion of those who are incapable of discernment—and they form the

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, January 26, 1809.

immense majority even amongst those who are called *gens d'esprit*—it is always he who fires the first shot that is looked upon as the originator of the rupture. Consequently, therefore, he neglected nothing which might tend to strengthen this thesis of provocation by Austria. His diplomatic proceedings with Alexander especially were intended to prove that he wished to avoid war, yet at that very moment he made it inevitable; and, it may be said with perfect truth, that no government ever had been driven to it by more inexorable necessity than the Cabinet of Vienna in 1809. No one, as a rule, examines anything regarding this point except the more or less subtle quibbles of the diplomatic notes exchanged at the last moment; but this is lowering the discussion to puerile proportions. The necessity for the war of 1809 was not the sudden consequence of a collision between the two rival powers; it originated in the peace of Presburg, at a period when, by an unworthy abuse of victory, and contrary to the advice of his wisest counsellors, Napoleon had taken from Austria at one stroke four of her provinces and a quarter of her population.

After this iniquitous and short-sighted treaty, which forced Austria, as a condition of her safety and a law of her existence, to watch for the hour of revenge, did Napoleon even make any effort to win back the friendship of this power by kindness? He had achieved her ruin by constraining her, through ill-concealed menaces, to join the continental blockade. He had at Tilsit publicly paraded his intention of excluding her from all great European affairs. He who would not have suffered Austria to touch a village on the Danube had, without consulting her, disposed successively of Prussia, Portugal, Spain, Tuscany, of the Papal States, and finally of Moldavia and Wallachia, provinces situated on the Austrian frontiers, as if these were questions that did not concern her, as if Austria had become a stranger to Europe, as if such enormities in no wise endangered either her safety, her interests, or her honour! Nay more; these encroachments, which so clearly predicted the fate sooner or later reserved for herself, had been accompanied by intolerable affronts. Not only had she been

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excluded from Erfurt, but a courteous act on her part had been met by insolent remonstrances. Finally, when she had begun to arm, in order to protect herself from such insults, she had received what was almost tantamount to an order to stop; and was asked, moreover, to sanction all the disgraceful proceedings which had roused the indignation of Europe, by recognising Joseph as King of Spain. And now, after being driven into a corner, after having had the sword forced into her hand by a successive series of affronts, she was accused of desiring to go to war! It was adding irony to bad faith thus to reproach her with disturbing the peace of the world. Full and entire pardon, however, was promised, provided she would consent to disband her troops. But, even if the Emperor Francis could have made up his mind to submit to such a humiliation, he might just as well at the same moment have signed his own downfall.

It was presuming rather too much on the ignorance and credulity of the public to expect them to believe that the actual attitude of Austria towards France was, as Napoleon[1] expressed it, that of the *lion with the lamb*; but in this respect he considered anything possible, and it must be confessed that he was authorised to do so by the marvellous success of his charlatanism. He resolved, in consequence, to maintain great apparent reserve henceforth towards this power, whilst pushing forward his own preparations for war and continuing his diplomatic intrigues. In order to make the Court of Vienna responsible before Europe for the rupture he had himself provoked, he planned a grand demonstration by France and Russia, by which these two Powers should offer to guarantee to Austria the integrity of her territory if she would consent to disarm. This guarantee of integrity was a formula singularly ill-chosen to reassure the Court of Vienna, for every one was aware how prodigal Napoleon had been of a similar guarantee to Turkey, and how little advantage it had brought the Turks. But after so solemn an offer, could Europe any longer doubt his desire to preserve peace? And if

[1] Napoleon to the King of Würtemberg, March 17.

Austria, intimidated, should withdraw in consequence of this joint proceeding; if, contrary to all expectation, she should submit in order to avoid war, Napoleon said to himself that, after all, there would always be sufficient time to make this diplomatic defeat almost as striking and decisive as a military disaster.

Romanzoff, the ambassador of Alexander and defender of the French alliance, of which system he considered himself to be the inventor, had not quitted Paris when the Emperor returned there. Napoleon saw him and made every effort to please him; he overpowered him with attention and presents; but, above all, tried to imbue him with his political views before sending him back to St. Petersburg. Alexander, he said, had so far been the sole gainer by the alliance; the time had now come to pay his price for it and to prove his gratitude. Was he going to demand very painful sacrifices from him? No! what was required from him was chiefly some energetic demonstration. Had this demonstration been made a little sooner it would have been sufficient to prevent the Court of Vienna harbouring the idea of making war. Even now her thoughts might be turned away from it if they spoke to her in language free from ambiguity, for a cabinet so famed for its traditional prudence would never venture to undertake a contest against the united armies of France and Russia. It was necessary, therefore, to give weight to their words by an imposing display of military force, and if Austria refused to yield she should be crushed by the simple advance towards each other of the two giants.

Nothing could be clearer than these propositions, or more difficult than openly to contest them. Neither the engagements nor their efficacy could be denied, and there were but very weak arguments to invoke with a view to evade their execution. On the other hand, the objections which could not be mentioned were as strong as they were numerous. Alexander had had a thousand proofs that Napoleon had not decided upon keeping the promises he made at Tilsit, until forced thereto by embarrassments which had affected his position; he therefore

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felt completely dispensed from gratitude, and had only to regard his own interest. In what way then did his interest counsel him to interfere for the purpose of terminating embarrassments which were so advantageous to him?

On the contrary he had everything to gain by their increase. In adopting this line of conduct he was only putting into practice the maxims Napoleon had so often preached to him; he sacrificed a 'policy of fancy' for the only great, the only true policy, 'the policy of interest.' It was easy to see that a great triumph over Austria would at once suggest the idea to Napoleon of taking back what he had given. But that was not all; the Emperor of the French manifestly now intended to strike a fatal blow at that monarchy. For whose benefit would he destroy it? Most assuredly not for the benefit of Russia. To whom would those Polish possessions of Austria return, which in Napoleon's hands might become so dangerous a weapon against Russian domination?

Thoughts of this kind, so natural in Alexander's position, were not calculated to inspire him with very ardent desires in favour of our cause; yet, on the other hand, he could not wish to see us defeated without risking the loss of the reward of his past civility. He was not yet firmly established either in Finland, where his troops, badly commanded, had been several times beaten by the Swedes, nor yet in the Principalities, which Turkey, once more on friendly terms with England, was preparing to contest with him vigorously; therefore, should any great disaster befall Napoleon, Alexander might find himself forced to renounce these much-coveted provinces.

Distracted by these different feelings the Czar could only act in an undecided and equivocal manner; yet he never had been offered the opportunity of playing a finer part than on this occasion. Now, and now only, that moment was drawing near which had been the dream of his life, for without any doubt he was 'the arbiter of Europe.' Napoleon seemed to wish to proclaim this himself by the noise he made about the concurrence of Alexander and about his armies. He seemed to rely more on the effect of this menace than upon the terror he himself inspired.

We could do nothing any more, in fact, without the Czar's permission. Obliged to carry on war upon the Danube whilst half our forces were occupied upon the Tagus, the folly of our policy had placed us at his discretion. It depended upon him to rouse the entire continent against us. Germany, quivering, urged without intermission by its thousand secret societies, only waited for a signal to rise from Hanover to the Tyrol. The King of Prussia had come to St. Petersburg with the Queen in December; he had been unceasing in his assurances of attachment, and, with the ardour of despair, would have seized on the opportunity for a fresh struggle. The Emperor of Austria had recently (in February) sent Prince Schwarzenberg to the Czar to endeavour to bring him back to the European cause which he had deserted after having served it with honour. England only asked to be allowed to receive him with open arms. Turkey even, who, with much clamour, had just broken off from Napoleon after having discovered the treachery he had been plotting against her at Tilsit and at Erfurt, would easily have been induced to fight against us. If, at the same time, we consider that all the other countries subject to our domination, such as Holland, Switzerland, and Italy, were thoroughly wearied of it, and that we then had two hundred and fifty thousand men in Spain, it must be acknowledged that all the elements of a coalition existed strong enough to prevent or to crush all resistance.

These elements Alexander held in his hand, and by one word might have unloosened them; this, however, he could do but on one condition, that of showing himself disinterested! By repudiating the benefits offered him he might be ungrateful, not only without remorse, but with the certainty of being blessed as a liberator and of leaving a great name in history. If beneath the cold ashes of his youthful illusions Alexander had preserved one spark of his original ambition in the depths of his heart, he must have felt, with bitter regret, that by neglecting this invaluable chance merely for the purpose of securing ill-gotten possessions, he was a second time untrue to himself and to his destiny. A most just retribution it was that gave him many

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causes to repent of his weakness, both in the war of 1812, and, later, when he saw himself deprived of the greater portion of those spoils which had tempted his cupidity. Perhaps this recollection may have been the source of the melancholy that haunted his latter years. But when a man has had a great opportunity, and has not known how to seize it, he for ever loses the right to complain of fortune.

Alexander chose a part more in conformity with his indolent and artificial nature. At once unwilling to renounce the advantages afforded him by Napoleon's alliance, and reluctant to contribute to the defeat of Austria, he decided on remaining as much as possible a mere spectator of the combat. When Caulaincourt communicated to him his master's desires he skilfully set aside the idea of a joint note to the Court of Vienna as inopportune and dangerous, but promised to use every effort to divert their thoughts from war. As to his military cooperation, he disputed neither the obligation nor its propriety, but he did not conceal that it must be of a very trifling nature in consequence of the embarrassments and dangers caused him by the inconvenient presents he had received from his august ally. He had a war on hand in the North with Sweden, he would soon have to encounter the united forces of Turkey and England in the South; this was much for an exhausted Empire, where moreover, public opinion was far from favourable to the French alliance. All that he could do for us would be to concentrate an army corps on the frontiers of Gallicia. These promises were realised, at least in part, with ostentatious zeal. Prussia was warned that she must submit to remain quiet, and that she could not break with France without breaking with Russia. Prince Schwarzenberg received declarations that were no less discouraging. He had been commissioned by his Court to ask the hand of the Czar's sister in marriage for one of the archdukes; it was refused to him, and the refusal moreover seasoned with the gravest remonstrances on the imprudent conduct of the Cabinet of Vienna. But, while thus prodigal of counsels and warnings, Alexander abstained from adopting that threatening and determined

attitude towards Austria, which alone would have made her relinquish the idea of war.

Thus an intervention failed, which, as might easily have been foreseen, never could have been efficacious, because it never could have been thoroughly sincere. It is difficult to believe that a mind so keen and penetrating as Napoleon's could have much relied on this mode of preventing a rupture, when he was himself apparently doing all he could at Paris to affront and exasperate Austria. For a long time past he had studiously avoided addressing a word to the ambassador Metternich; he made his journals insult the Court of Vienna, —provocations, the source of which could not be mistaken, as it was well known that the editors were the police; he commanded the Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to sequestrate the property of all those who should not return within thirty days (Feb. 15), and he desired them to make their troops take up military positions along the boundaries of their respective territories (Feb. 21). His thoughts, therefore, were no longer of peace, or if perchance slight notions of preserving it flitted now and then across his mind, they were alone caused by occasional doubts as to the issue of the new enterprise he was about to embark in. He flattered himself, however, that he would drag Alexander on much further than he wished to go, and, he said to himself, that once the Czar had personally compromised himself in the negotiations, he would no longer have a pretext for refusing to support him.

But, too much in the habit of guarding against surprise to rely altogether upon any one except himself, Napoleon made all his preparations for war as if his troops alone were to encounter Austria, and that their numbers equalled, if they did not exceed, those at the disposal of that power. At the outset he estimated that he would require four hundred thousand men to subdue her; and from the moment he decided on this abrupt evolution he made his first military arrangements at Valladolid. The Guards instantly received orders to retire towards France. He likewise recalled from Spain several cavalry regiments, which would be more useful on the large plains of

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the Danube than in those mountainous regions where they often were nothing but an encumbrance. At the same time Joseph was desired to send back some of the most distinguished chiefs of the army in Spain, amongst others, Monbrun, an incomparable cavalry general; Lasalle, one of the youngest heroes of the army; Marshals Bessières and Lefebvre, men of action and of tried bravery, but more useful in battle than in council, and consequently more in their proper place under Napoleon's direct orders than in Spain, where the generals, having to be left henceforth most frequently to their own guidance, would have to trust to their own inspirations.

A long-expected event soon occurred which enabled Napoleon to recall that general whom of all others he most wished to keep near him. On the 20th of February, 1809, the inhabitants of Saragossa, half buried in dust beneath their walls, and vanquished by a horrible epidemic far more than by our arms, surrendered the smoking remains of their city to Marshal Lannes, after a defence, the recollection of which will live in the memory of mankind for ages, when the names of the most celebrated victories of that period shall have faded away. Upwards of fifty thousand men perished during the two sieges. As our attacks had been carried on chiefly by mining and heavy artillery—by mathematical rather than physical strength—our losses were considerably less. This was an additional motive for showing indulgence towards the survivors. The eyes of the entire world were fixed upon them, lost in admiration. They had pushed courage to frenzy, in some instances vengeance even to cruelty; they had shown every sort of fanaticism merged in one alone; but never were ruins watered with blood that had been poured forth with such dazzling heroism. Never were soldiers, forsaken by the fate of arms, more worthy of the respect of their conquerors. It must be regretted that Lannes knew not how to honour his victory by a generosity as complete as the misfortunes of these glorious foes were great. He treated the defenders of Saragossa as if they were a band of brigands caught in their den. In spite of a capitulation, very summary it is true, yet in due form, and

signed by his own hand, expressly guaranteeing 'security to life and property' (Art. VI), he had two of the leaders who had most aided the resistance executed, and gave up the corpse of the dead town to the excesses of his soldiery.

French historians have always denied the existence of this capitulation, while, on the other hand, it is asserted with extreme vehemence by English and Spanish historians.[1] What is certain, is, that its text was printed in full in the *Gazette de Madrid*, of the 11th of March, 1809, in consequence of representations from the Junta of Saragossa; and in King Joseph's correspondence, under date of the 27th of February, 1809, a word can be read which seems to settle the discussion; 'Sire!' he writes to his brother, 'I have received the *deed of surrender* of Saragossa.' This deed of surrender could be nothing but the document we allude to, for no deed is drawn up for a town which surrenders at discretion.

However this may be, the defenders of Saragossa stood in no need of a capitulation. They should have been for ever sacred to any man possessing the heart of a patriot or a soldier. So true is this, that even King Joseph could not resist paying homage to their courage in the official report he published of the siege, an act, however, which was soon visited by a sharp reprimand. On March 11 Napoleon wrote to him: 'Brother! I have read an article in the *Gazette of Madrid* which gives an account of the taking of Saragossa. It praises those who defended the town. Truly! this is singular policy! *Certain it is, that no Frenchman exists who has not the greatest contempt for those who defended Saragossa.*' This at least is what he would have wished, for this great searcher after glory had reached the point of believing that honour or disgrace no longer existed except through him, and that one and the other were to be weighed according to the sentiments evinced towards him. To restore the balance the Emperor branded the intrepid

[1] See amongst others on this point the *Histoire du Siége de Saragossa*, by Général Rogniat; the *Défense de Saragossa*, by Manuel Cavallero; Robert Southey, *History of the Peninsular War*; Toreno; and the *Mémoire sur le second siége de Saragossa*, by Pedro Maria Ric, himself the negotiator (in the *Coll. suppl. des Mém. relatifs à la Rév. Française*).

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young man, who had been the life and soul of this immortal defence, with the epithet of coward. 'That man,' said the *Moniteur* of March 2, 1809, when speking of Palafox, 'is *an object of contempt* to the whole of the enemy's army, where he is accused of presumption and of *cowardice*. He was never seen in posts of danger.' And a few days later 'Palafox's life is despaired of. *That man is detested by the town.*'[1] Found dying at Saragossa, Joseph Palafox was taken to France by his orders, and confined in the fort of Vincennes, where he remained a prisoner until the fall of the Empire, treated like a criminal for having defended a cause the most just that can be imagined. Such ignoble reprisals against fallen foes who were an honour to their age have, for the most part, passed by unperceived, and it would be committing a strange mistake to suppose Napoleon capable of ever having experienced the faintest regret for such acts; yet, did the author of so many crimes, when himself a captive at St. Helena making so much display of his martyrdom and wearying Europe with his lamentations on the subject of a bottle of wine refused to him for his table, never behold flitting across his recollections the stoical figure of the young defender of Saragossa?

In view of all these facts it is allowable to suppose that Lannes, in the merciless severity with which he treated the vanquished, was *not* following his personal sentiments, but rather obeying instructions that must have been repugnant to a man of such true courage. The episode, nevertheless, remains as a stain upon his memory. When obeying the Emperor's summons back to France, Lannes took with him a fame henceforth tarnished, and a life of which the days were already numbered.

These reinforcements, withdrawn from the army of Spain, constituted but a small portion of those which Napoleon proposed to send to the troops he had kept in Germany under the orders of Marshals Davout and Bernadotte. The two conscriptions he had levied in September, 1808, were still nearly intact; the one in advance of 1810, the other consisting

[1] *Moniteur* of March 8.

of those who had escaped the conscriptions of the preceding years, together amounting to one hundred and sixty thousand men. He organized them at once, by means of the regimental staffs and of the depôts—a species of abyss ever open and capable of being enlarged indefinitely.

He thus brought his infantry regiments up to three thousand men present under arms, which presupposes an effective strength of nearly four thousand; his cavalry regiments to a thousand men, presupposing twelve hundred. Finding a great deficiency of officers, however, to command troops of this new formation, he had recourse to certain expeditious measures which have in no small degree contributed to his renown as an organizer, but which, according to all probability, will be regarded with less admiration by posterity than by the present generation.

He first instituted a kind of conscription by favour amongst the young students of from seventeen to eighteen years of age in the military schools, by virtue of which these children were promoted before the fixed time, or, in other words, were allowed to shed their blood before the usual age. He took a hundred and sixty-eight from Saint Cyr, as many from La Flèche, fifty from the Polytechnic school, and fifty from that of Compiègne. This result not appearing to suffice, he extended the operation to all the lyceums of the Empire. These establishments were then forty in number; therefore ten pupils from each lyceum brought him 'four hundred *caporaux-fourriers* to send to the regiments.'[1]

It was then necessary to fill up the gaps produced in the military schools by this ingenious device. Little could be expected, in this regard, from the spontaneous zeal of any family, for measures of the kind were not exactly calculated to induce fathers to send their children thither. But Napoleon's genius for organization quickly found a remedy. At the period of the campaign of 1806 he had struck upon the idea of forming companies of Guards of Honour, especially destined for the enrolment of young men of rank who might be attracted, it was hoped, by the prospect of Imperial favours. This creation,

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, March 8, 1808.

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pre-eminently intended for the old aristocracy, had however met with little success. Napoleon now restored it under another form, by substituting compulsory for voluntary enrolment. He ordered Fouché, in consequence, 'to draw up for him a list of ten families in each department, and fifty in Paris,' taking care that it should be composed of *those ancient and rich families who were not in the system.* Such of their children as were above sixteen and under eighteen years of age were to be sent by force to the school at Saint-Cyr; 'If they make any objection,' added the Emperor, '*no other reason is to be given except that such is my good pleasure.*'[1]

These words were the exact formula of the old *régime;* but it would have been necessary to go back very far, and to unite many fearful epochs in one, in order to find anything in them which could equal this collection of measures. It seemed as though they had been systematically combined by a scientific hand with the intention of extinguishing the intellect of France, and of poisoning the source of her vital strength. They no longer robbed her only of a robust generation of peasants and artisans who formed the body of the nation, but they attacked her very heart and brain; they selected with jealous care from amongst the forms of the college and the school that chosen youthful band, that precious reserve which composed the literature, art, science, and civilization of the future; and before its education was finished they tore it away in its bloom, fresh from the maternal embrace, to send it to be slaughtered on the battle-field.

France was bleeding to death; nevertheless, were these two conscriptions and these supplementary recruits all that the country could give? Napoleon's piercing eye soon discovered new additions which he could make to these contributions towards the blood-tax. By ordering an extra levy of eighty thousand for each of the four years prior to 1808, he had brought up their regular contingent to a hundred thousand men; was it not,

[1] This letter of Dec. 3 is one of those which it has not been thought proper to insert in the 'Correspondence of Napoleon.'

therefore, a flagrant injustice to require only eighty thousand for 1810?

The principle of equality, so dear to the French, imperatively demanded the abolition of so crying an abuse. He consequently increased the quota for the year 1810; but, by raising it from twenty to thirty thousand men, he destroyed the equilibrium anew; this again enabled him to demand a fresh supplement of ten thousand conscripts for the Imperial guard for the years prior to 1810. Complaint could not be thought of, for they were rather favoured than otherwise, as the contribution demanded was only of ten instead of forty thousand men, the number strictly requisite to restore the balance. But this favour was of evil omen, and bid them be prepared for other calls.

All these arrangements were made and carried out by Napoleon without consulting even the Senate. They were submitted to it later, although this too was in direct violation of the constitution of the Empire,[1]—but its sanction was not asked until the Emperor was actually fighting the Austrians in the valley of the Danube.[2] Measures of the kind were, in fact, not practicable, except when done secretly. From the moment that they became publicly known they aroused grave discontent, amounting to revolt amongst the western population, and which was stifled under the name of brigandage. Moreover, they brought into existence, as a necessary consequence, that atrocious law on refractory conscripts, of which, in its time and place, I shall examine the spirit and development.

Thanks to these levies of two hundred and forty thousand men thus added to the armies of Italy and of Germany, Napoleon soon found himself in a position to confront the troops of Austria. He wished Prince Eugène to enter upon the campaign with a hundred thousand men, including Marmont's corps then occupying Dalmatia, and he ordered him to concentrate his troops in Friuli; he sent the army of the Rhine, commanded by Davout, from Erfurt on Würzburg; he despatched Lefebvre

[1] Napoleon to Lacuée, March 31, 1809.

[2] In the sitting of April 18.

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to Munich to take command of the Bavarian contingent, numbering forty thousand men; he desired Bernadotte, who was at the head of the Saxon-Polish contingent, to replace the French garrisons of Glogau, Cüstrin, Stettin, and Dantzic by Poles, and to keep near Dresden in order to watch Bohemia. Finally, Masséna was directed to organize a corps of a new description at Strassburg, which, under the name of the *Army of Observation of the Rhine*, should hold itself in readiness to march to the Danube at the first signal.

The Princes of the Confederation of the Rhine, whose united forces exceeded one hundred thousand men, received repeated orders to raise their effective strength to its full complement. Forced to take up arms against their country's cause, and perfectly aware of the hatred borne to our domination throughout Germany, these unhappy Princes were not even allowed to flatter themselves that whilst submitting to a lamentable necessity, they were at least obeying voluntarily, and acting independently. No effort was made to disguise the yoke to which they were subject, as their corps of auxiliaries were everywhere commanded by our generals;—the Saxons by Bernadotte; the Bavarians by Lefebvre; those of Würtemberg by Vandamme, who was forced upon the King of Würtemberg by Napoleon, despite his well-founded protests.

The army of Italy was to remain under the orders of Eugène, a brave young man full of ardour, but without military renown, and in whom the fact of his august relationship was supposed to supply the defect of experience and long service. As to the different divisions of the army of Germany, they were to be definitively subdivided, after some little consideration, into seven army-corps, exclusive of the guard and of Bessières' cavalry. According to Napoleon's own calculation these forces were to be allotted in the following manner: Lannes was to have fifty thousand men; Davout sixty thousand; Masséna fifty thousand; Lefebvre forty thousand; Augereau twenty thousand; Bernadotte fifty thousand; King Jerome twelve thousand; which, with the twenty-two thousand guards and the twenty thousand of Bessières' corps, formed a total of three hundred

and twenty-four thousand soldiers, and with those of the army of Italy, four hundred and twenty-four thousand.[1]

The Austrian forces, though at first sight apparently of equal strength, were in reality very inferior to this enormous mass, being in great part composed of militia who could not with impunity be opposed to regular troops. The latter, of whom the acting army was to consist, did not, all included, amount to more than three hundred thousand men.

Archduke John was to attack Prince Eugène with fifty thousand men, supported by an insurrection in the Tyrol just about to break out; Archduke Ferdinand was to menace Saxon Poland with forty thousand men; and Archduke Charles, who commanded the chief army, occupied Western Bohemia with one hundred and eighty thousand men, ready to advance upon Bavaria. Two other detachments, of from ten to fifteen thousand men, were placed as corps of observation, one in Dalmatia, the other in the Tyrol. The militia, in fine, who exceeded a hundred and fifty thousand men, were held in reserve in the neighbourhood of Vienna and in Hungary as a last resource.

In spite of the inferiority of its forces the Cabinet of Vienna possessed a substantial advantage over us if it had known how to act in time; for its troops were concentrated whilst ours were lamentably dispersed. If we suppose Bonaparte in the place and position of the Archduke Charles, the result would not have been doubtful for one instant; in a few marches he would have been in the middle of our scattered army-corps, and would have defeated them one after the other. But the Archduke, though a clever general, was methodical and timid by nature, and cherished an admiration for the genius of his adversary, almost amounting to superstition, which partially paralysed his faculties; nor was the proverbial Austrian slowness capable of inspiring him with that life and spirit in which he failed.

Every one at Vienna, however, felt the necessity for prompt action if they wished to profit by an opportunity for which they

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, April 8.

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had long been seeking. The partisans of the war, Stadion, Gentz, and Pozzo di Borgo redoubled their efforts to put an end to the hesitation of the Court. Did they wish to wait until Napoleon should have finished his preparations in order to leave him time to crush Spain, and to allow German enthusiasm to cool down and become disheartened? Why did they speak of the menaces of Russia? That was nothing but an empty scarecrow. Every one knew that throughout his whole empire, the French alliance was hated, and that Alexander alone counselled peace. If this one opportunity were not seized, the only alternative would be disarmament and submission, to which for more than one reason they would in any case soon be driven. In spite of the fresh subsidies recently received from England, Austria was ruined by this immense armament; victory alone could restore her exhausted finances, and if they must succumb in one manner or another it were better to fall with honour beneath the blows of Europe's enemy than beneath the weight of a disgraceful bankruptcy brought on by a more disgraceful failure.

Certain it is, that according to the reports of the Minister of Finance, Count O'Donnell, the resources of Austria no longer sufficed for the maintenance of her army, and that 'it was necessary to send it to live elsewhere, or to let it feed upon and exhaust Austria herself.' This necessity, though pressing less upon France, was nevertheless beginning to be keenly felt there ever since our armies had ceased to be maintained by Prussia. Napoleon, for the sake of popularity, had invariably kept his budgets at an uniform figure, independent of the course of events, as though they were a sort of arrangement made by Providence and placed above all terrestrial influences. Every year, or rather each time that he had to announce any enterprise calculated to alarm the public, his ministers came to the Legislative Body and proclaimed with much solemnity that 'The taxes would not be increased!' The war contributions, the confiscations, the seizure of English merchandise, the alienation of crown lands in the conquered countries, and of national property in France, had in fact enabled him, one way or

another, to keep this promise, and to present well balanced budgets, owing to the secret resources by which he covered the deficits. But this spring, which had seemed inexhaustible, was about to fail, unless renewed by a fresh stroke of that magic wand,—Napoleon's sword. Not only the expenses had considerably augmented, notwithstanding the pretensions to immutability claimed by the budget, but the receipts, which were supposed to follow an ascending scale, had diminished in far larger proportions. The Customs, affected by the continental blockade, had fallen more than twenty-five millions; the receipts from the alienation of national property had been reduced, in consequence of the state of general uneasiness, to a much smaller sum than had been calculated upon. Some twelve millions had been wasted in an insane effort to prevent a fall in the Funds and the lowering of the Five per Cents below eighty. Mollier calculates that this financial freak might have cost the State a *milliard* if Napoleon had not been obliged to give it up. These discoveries, together with other less important mistakes, showed a deficit of about fifty millions for the year 1808, and this, notwithstanding that our troops, both in Prussia and in Spain, were almost always fed at the expense of the enemy.

This deficit, combined with some of the previous accounts yet unpaid, consisted of nearly a hundred millions, in spite of which, however, the ministry coolly kept their budget at the ideal figure of 730,000,000. Moreover, according to Mollier's calculation, the expenses of the Ministry of War for 1808 alone amounted to 380,000,000.[1] The military chest was always the infallible panacea for such evils; in fact, by it alone could the advances from the departmental chests be covered; for the sale of crown and national property, on which reliance was supposed to be placed, was but a precarious resource owing to want of purchasers. Its capital amounted to about 290,000,000, but nearly two-thirds of this sum, being the last portion of the contributions recoverable from Prussia, could not be exacted till 1809, 1810, and 1811. Napoleon therefore must, like Austria, have before long found it impossible to maintain

[1] Mollier: *Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor.*

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the enormous army he had just organized. On the other hand, both powers had placed themselves in a position which rendered disarmament morally impossible. Hence, though war was not yet openly declared, it may be said to have virtually commenced. This situation of affairs, which admitted of no issue but by recourse to arms, deprives the last communications between the Courts of Vienna and of Paris of all interest. Their diplomatic relations at that period were nothing but a kind of conventional form, which served to disguise the truth, and to lead by a measured pace to an end foreseen by every one. Metternich had announced to Champagny on the 2nd of March that the measures adopted by Napoleon had forced the Cabinet of Vienna to place her army on a footing of war; and the French Minister had answered by bitter recriminations, which left little hope of a reconciliation, even had the grievances been less serious and the passions less excited.[1]

Henceforward the two governments thought only of completing their military arrangements. Masséna received the order to transfer his head-quarters from Strasburg to Ulm; Davout to advance from Würzburg to Ratisbon; Lannes to concentrate his army-corps at Augsburg. Napoleon, remembering the difficulties which the Danube had caused him during the campaign of 1805, despatched a corps of 1500 marines to that river for the purpose of facilitating his passage between its two banks. Major-General Berthier was sent to Strasburg to press forward the organization and departure of troops that were behindhand. He was ordered to centralize the army at Ratisbon: 'But,' added Napoleon, 'Donauwörth and the line of the Lech is the position which must be occupied in case the enemy should anticipate me.[2] In Italy, Murat was desired to march upon Rome, 'with the speed of lightning,' to replace there the troops commanded by Miollis, who had been sent to upper Italy, and to 'destroy this focus of insurrection.' The Emperor announced to him his intention of putting an end to the

[1] Documents communicated to the Senate, Nos. VIII and XIV.
[2] Instructions of March 30, 1809.

temporal power and of leaving the Pope merely his title of Bishop of Rome, believing, not unwisely, that this measure, which had been so long postponed, would pass by almost unperceived amidst the din of war.[1]

Austria might have attacked us with immense advantage from the 28th of March, but she wasted in false manœuvres the time which Napoleon so well knew how to use. The army of Archduke Charles, concentrated near Pilsen in Bohemia, could easily, in five days march, have fallen upon our scattered corps at Ratisbon. Instead of attacking us in this bold fashion, and thereby creating disorder and terror amidst our cantonments, he left only one corps of 40,000 men in Bohemia under the orders of Bellegarde, and, taking the hundred and forty thousand others with him, made a long circuit in order to cross the Danube at Linz, and to present himself on the Inn conformably to the old routine of Austrian warfare. It is said that he adopted this plan against his own better judgment at the conclusion of a long discussion with Generals Grünn and Mayer, one of whom approved of the former, and the other of the latter plan; but if this be true his conduct is no less reprehensible; for such disagreement gives so much the greater weight to the opinion of a Commander-in-Chief, who alone ought to decide as he alone is responsible.

In such a state of things, those incidents which are only necessary to change menacing demonstrations into hostile declarations, are never long wanting; they here occurred almost simultaneously on both sides. A French officer carrying dispatches, though unofficially, from the Embassy at Vienna to the Legation at Munich, was arrested at Branua, and all his papers were seized and opened. A few days afterwards, in a march from Würzburg to Ratisbon, Davout's outposts violated the territory of the Austrian Empire.[2] Napoleon was no sooner informed of the arrest of the French officer than, by way of reprisal, he ordered that the couriers of the Austrian Cabinet

[1] Napoleon to Murat, April 5.

[2] This fact is confirmed by a letter from Napoleon to Clarke, under date the 5th of April.

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should be seized on every route. Even this much was not needed to cause a rupture, now that all the preliminaries to it were terminated. Metternich demanded his passports, and on the morning of the 10th of April the Archduke Charles crossed the Inn with his army, whilst the Tyrol, taking fire with the rapidity of a train of powder, rose from one end to the other, to drive out the Bavarian garrisons.

Napoleon expected to be attacked, but not before the 15th of April, the period which he had fixed upon for joining his army on the Danube. But when, on the 10th of April, the Austrian ambassador demanded his passports, he saw clearly that the opening of the campaign was imminent, and he at once telegraphed to Berthier, who he supposed must be still at Strasburg, instantly to operate the concentration of the army, not at Ratisbon any longer, but at Augsburg and Donauwörth. In a letter of the same date, which has become the basis of all the accusations since then launched against this Major-General, he explains his despatch to Berthier and recommends him anew 'to turn back towards the Lech, that is to say, from Augsburg to Donauwörth, should the Austrians make an attack before the 15th of April.' If the enemy made no move, but in that case only,[1] Davout was to remain at Ratisbon whilst Masséna was operating his movement from Ulm to Augsburg. But, on receiving the news of the passage of the Inn, Berthier had quitted Strasburg on the 11th to join the army, so that Napoleon's letter and despatch did not reach him until the 16th of April at Augsburg, just when the Emperor himself was on the point of arriving at head-quarters. Berthier, therefore, had no other guide but his instructions of the 30th of March, written in anticipation of the advance of the Austrians, not by the Inn, but from the side of Bohemia. These instructions, it is true, clearly

[1] The author of the *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* here commits a mistake in supposing that the despatch was ambiguous, and that it ordered Berthier to leave Davout at Ratisbon *in any case*. The letter and the despatch are perfectly clear. It is there said, no doubt, that Davout is to remain at Ratisbon 'under all circumstances;' but the preceding phrase, '*If the enemy makes no move*,' leaves no room for doubt.

foresaw the possibility of a concentration on the Lech, but 'in case the enemy should anticipate us;' which was rather a vague order, and susceptible of many different interpretations.

In a certain sense, it might be said, that the enemy did not anticipate us; for, after having crossed the Inn, he marched on but slowly and with difficulty towards the Isar, and had not as yet reached that river, behind which our army was in part concentrated. Davout, in fact, occupied Ratisbon with a corps which would consist of 60,000 men when joined by the Friant division still in the rear, and the Bavarians had assembled to the number of 40,000, part at Landshut and part at Neustadt. This position, however, was dangerous, because the line of the Isar could not be well defended, and because, if this line were once forced, Davout would find himself cut off from the bulk of the army then at Augsburg. Left to his own inspirations Berthier did little to ward off this danger; he even recalled Davout to Ratisbon, which he had already quitted in order to fall back on our centre, and he sent the Oudinot divisions to his assistance. But, although on this occasion he showed that indecision so common in men who are unaccustomed ever to act by themselves, Berthier in no way deserves all the reproaches which have been lavished upon him, as he received Napoleon's orders too late to carry them into effect.

It was full time that the Emperor should arrive on the theatre of war to repair the faults of his lieutenant. One Marshal had even gone so far as to accuse Berthier of meditating defection.[1] Informed of the passage of the Inn by telegraph at 8 o'clock on the evening of the 12th of April, Napoleon quitted Paris on the morning of the 13th, and on the morning of the 17th reached Donauwörth, the very point where he had wished to operate the concentration of his army. In the vicinity he had only the Würtembergers of Vandamme, who had arrived at Ingolstadt, and the Bavarian corps encamped between Geisenfeld and Neustadt. Davout was still isolated at Ratisbon, and Masséna was at Augsburg with his army-corps and the Oudinot divisions that were to form portion of Lannes' corps. As to the

[1] General Pelet: *Mémoires sur la Guerre de 1809.*

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Guard, it had scarcely passed beyond Würtemberg. Our army, therefore, extended along a distance of five and twenty leagues, with its back towards the Danube and its front towards the Isar, which the Austrians had crossed the day before. In the course of the day, on April 16, their advance guard had appeared on the Isar before Landshut, and had commenced an engagement with the Bavarian division under Deroy, who defended the town; but the passage of the river having been forced upon two other points Deroy fell back on Neustadt. At the conclusion of this affair the whole Austrian army, with the exception of the corps left on the borders of Bohemia, had passed the Isar at Landshut, at Moosburg, and at Dingolfing, and was advancing towards us, threatening to cut our line in the middle.

Henceforth the two armies found themselves face to face, in nearly equal numbers,[1] in a kind of irregular quadrilateral, of which the two upper sides were formed by the Danube, and the two others by the Isar and the Lech; but the one which was concentrated possessed an incalculable advantage over the other which had not yet been able to accomplish this object. Archduke Charles, after having advanced by Landshut, might in two marches at the least have reached Obersaal on the Danube, have there stationed himself between the Bavarian corps and that of Davout, and have crushed them one after the other simply by the bulk of his army. But no sooner had he entered into a new country, intersected by swamps, woods, and hills, and found himself amidst corps of antagonists of whose force and precise position he had no exact knowledge, than his timorous scruples took stronger possession of him than ever, and his slowness, his indecision, and his gropings, a second time saved our army from an almost inevitable check. He sent out his troops in three different directions by the three different roads which radiated from Landshut, but more as if to observe than to fight. The corps of Hiller and of the Archduke Louis were sent to Mainburg and to Siegenberg, opposite to the Bavarians; a detachment of minor importance went to re-

[1] According to General Stutterheim the forces which the Archduke had under his hand amounted to 126,000 men; *Histoire de la Guerre de* 1809.

connoitre the road to Ratisbon on the right, and the Archduke himself advanced on Rohr by the central highway (April 18).

In the same degree that these movements were timid and unsteady, Napoleon's were precise, prompt and decisive. From the moment of his arrival he had perceived the inadvisability of so extended a line and the necessity of concentrating his army. He lost no time, therefore, in sending Davout an order to return from Ratisbon to Neustadt, promising to go to meet him with the Bavarians, and thus assist his move. At the same time he summoned Masséna from Augsburg to Pfaffenhofen, when that Marshal would be both nearer to the centre of the army and capable of menacing Landshut, that is to say, the Archduke's line of retreat. By means of this double movement Napoleon drew back his left, which was too much in advance, and brought forward his right, which had been too much in the rear.

On the 19th of April, at early morn, Davout quitted Ratisbon, leaving only one regiment there to guard the bridge on the Danube against the army in Bohemia. His cavalry, artillery, and baggage took the road which borders the Danube. His infantry wended their way along the wooded heights that command the route from Abach to Tengen. This march performed along the Danube and in the very face of the Austrian army, was a most critical operation; moreover, it offered Archduke Charles the utmost chance of separating Davout from Napoleon. But, at the same moment that Davout was quitting Ratisbon the Archduke was quitting Rohr to march himself upon that town; instead, however, of taking the road by the Danube, by which he could have barred Davout's passage, he had taken one to the right, and reached Ratisbon by Egloffsheim. One of his corps alone, that of Hohenzollern, encountered the Saint-Hilaire and Friant divisions between Saalhaupt and Tengen. After a sharp combat, known amongst us as the battle of Thann, and by the Germans as that of Tengen, these two divisions drove Hohenzollern back upon Hausen, and Davout effected his junction with the Bavarians (April 19).

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Meanwhile, Masséna had been advancing on his side as far as Freising, so that our army had been concentrated, while that of the Archduke had been dispersed. The Austrian corps, scattered between Abens and Ratisbon, no longer possessed any cohesion, and they left that initiative to Napoleon of which they had not known how to take advantage. They presented for his attack four principal groups. Hiller was at Mainburg, already apprehensive of Masséna's march on his rear, and Archduke Louis formed an extended line from Siegenberg to Kirschdorf, three or four leagues from Mainburg. Seven or eight leagues further on, in the neighbourhood of Ratisbon, was Archduke Charles, whose most advanced corps was at Hausen, and had fought the day before. Napoleon at once determined to cut this unduly extended line in two, and then to destroy its separate and disjointed pieces. He left Davout before Hausen with instructions to keep back Archduke Charles, whilst he, the Emperor, proceeded to throw the bulk of his forces against Archduke Louis at Kirschdorf and at Siegenberg. Lannes was sent to Rohr with two divisions in order still farther to prevent all communication between the enemy's two wings. These measures once taken, Napoleon sallied forth by Abensberg with the Bavarians and Würtembergers towards Offenstetten and Kirschdorf; he there overthrew the outposts of Archduke Louis, and drove them back upon Rohr, where they were met by Lannes, who completed their defeat. Archduke Louis, himself attacked at Siegenberg by General Wrede, and perceiving with dismay that his right was on the point of being turned, fell back in all haste towards Pfaffenhausen, where he joined Hiller who had come from Mainburg, but who had been unable to take any part in the combat (April 20).

In consequence of this short battle, in which not more than from twenty-five to thirty thousand Austrians had been engaged owing to the bad tactics of their commander-in-chief, the enemy's army found itself cut into two masses which could no longer unite. One portion was thrown back in disorder upon Landshut, where it ran great risk of being caught between Napoleon, who pursued it by Pfaffenhausen, and Masséna, who

came along by Moosburg and the right bank of the Isar; the other was driven towards Ratisbon, and Napoleon, who believed that town to be still occupied by the troops Davout had left there, flattered himself that he had thus secured its complete destruction.

When, in the course of the day on April 21, at the conclusion of a third combat, more rapid even than those which had preceded it, Napoleon beheld himself master of Landshut in spite of Hiller's vain endeavours to defend it against the combined forces of Lannes and of Masséna, he considered the army of Archduke Charles as irretrievably lost. Doubtless it could no longer effect its escape, except by Ratisbon, believed to be still in our possession, by Landshut, then occupied by us, or by Straubing, where it was hoped that we might prevent its passage. But, however admirable his tactics had been during those three days, he overrated their importance, and above all overrated them when reporting them to others, as was his constant habit, in the hope that, by extravagantly exaggerating his successes, he might produce a strong impression upon the popular imagination. According to a note which he had printed and circulated in all directions, under date of April 21, 'The Austrian army had been struck by that fire from Heaven which punishes *the ungrateful, the unjust*, and *the perfidious;* it had been *pulverised*. All its army-corps had been crushed. More than twenty of its generals had been killed or wounded; *one archduke had been killed and two wounded*. They had upwards of 30,000 prisoners, &c. Of this army, which had dared to defy the French army, but a very small remnant had recrossed the Inn;' &c.

The whole note was in this style. Such unblushing inventions tarnished the renown of those victories, which certainly were less remarkable for their results, brilliant though these were, than for the skilful combinations which had led to them, and which were masterpieces of genius. The Austrian army was far from being pulverised, as had been asserted. Its separation into two distinct masses had, it is true, been achieved, but the Archduke Charles was still master of Ratisbon, where he kept that regiment prisoner which had been left there by us; he had

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summoned a division of the army of Bohemia to his aid, and, certain henceforth of being able to effect his retreat through that town, he commenced an attack, late though it was, against Davout's and Lefebvre's corps, in the neighbourhood of Eckmühl, where they had been ordered to hold him in check.

The Emperor, after having despatched Bessières' cavalry in pursuit of Hiller, and confided Landshut to a portion of Masséna's corps, set out with the remainder of his forces to support Davout. He reached Eckmühl at two o'clock in the afternoon. By a strategic freak that has never been explained, the Archduke, instead of renewing his attack with his whole united corps, left none at Eckmühl but those of Rosenberg and of Hohenzollern. He sent the others to scour the country in the direction of Abach, where he ought to have concentrated merely sufficient troops to defend the high road along the Danube from Montbrun's light cavalry. The corps stationed at Eckmühl, in spite of their inferior numbers, resisted with great bravery the repeated assaults made by Lannes, Lefebvre, and Davout, but after many hours of fighting, Rosenberg, finding himself surrounded on all sides and seeing no hope of succour, retreated to Ratisbon, leaving the battle-field covered with dead. The Archduke at once rushed forward with his cavalry to protect this retrograde movement, which soon became general throughout the entire army. The Austrian cavalry, charged by ours, were driven back upon their own infantry, but in due time the reserve under Prince Lichtenstein advanced, and, attacking our cuirassiers, continued a desperate struggle far on into the night (April 22).

Napoleon deemed it prudent not to push the pursuit too far, and the Archduke was thus enabled to reach Ratisbon under cover of the darkness. On the morning of April 23 he recrossed the Danube by two bridges within sight of the Emperor, who endeavoured, without success, to impede the operation. He was able, however, to force his entrance into the town early enough to capture a small portion of the rear guard, left there by the Archduke.

Napoleon's military genius had never appeared grander,

more decided, or more fertile in resources than during this five-days battle, of which the diverse episodes at Thann, Abensberg, Landshut, Eckmühl, and Ratisbon had only been the development of one single thought, and of which each stage, intended to rectify bad positions that were not of his creation, had also each been marked by a victory. Nothing had been left to chance, nor to those break-neck tactics which place the fortune of a country at stake only for the purpose of producing a startling effect. Napoleon had understood how to convert a retrograde evolution, which is always so difficult to execute in presence of an enemy, into an offensive movement that broke through the Austrian centre, and threw their divided army back upon the opposite banks of the Danube. Never had the difficulties of so inextricable a position been disentangled, cleared away, and overcome with greater coolness, coherence, and firmness. The opening of this campaign is a model of scientific warfare; a masterpiece alike of boldness and of prudence, worthy in all its points of the first campaign in Italy, and almost above criticism, but for the falsehoods that disgraced it. Napoleon, in his bulletin, takes credit for having captured 60,000 prisoners, which, with a minimum of 15,000 killed or wounded, diminished the Austrian army by 75,000 or 80,000 combatants. But, according to the most probable calculations, it had at the outside lost only one quarter of that number, all included.

The moral effect of this magnificent beginning was somewhat weakened by the bad news which arrived successively from Italy, the Tyrol, and Poland. In Italy, Prince Eugène, unexpectedly attacked by Archduke John before he had been able to concentrate his army, had lost his advance-guard at Pordenone and had been then himself thoroughly defeated at Sacile. From thence he had been driven back to the Adige. Napoleon, on hearing of these disasters, perceived, though not without painful surprise, that his adoption of Eugène did not also include the transmission of his own intellect and spirit. He had been able, it is true, to make Prince Eugène his son and his lieutenant, but not to endow him besides with genius and

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experience, although on the whole he was a young man gifted with excellent qualities. He gave vent to his disappointment in terms full of bitterness: 'I see with pain,' he wrote to him, 'that you have neither the habit of war, nor any idea how to make it. . . . I ought to have sent Masséna to you and have given you command of the cavalry under his orders. I committed a fault in giving you command of the army. I know that in Italy you pretend to despise Masséna; but, if I had sent him, what has happened would not have taken place. Masséna has military talents before which every one must bow.'[1]

Certain it is, that it would have been infinitely juster and wiser to have given this great military man a command to which he had every claim, than to have employed him at Eckmühl 'in carrying orders' on the field of battle like an orderly officer, as the Emperor, with a kind of petty vanity, stated in his first bulletin. But whose fault was this, if not the fault of Napoleon himself, whose infatuation is visible in the most insignificant details? In one letter, to Eugène, he says: 'I cannot conceive how my troops were beaten by that *Austrian canaille*. They numbered 300,000 here, and yet I always beat them though only *one against seven*.'[2] Austrian *canaille!* Spanish *canaille!* the more formidable Napoleon's enemies became, the more he affected to despise them, as if it depended upon him to make them contemptible in reality, and to diminish obstacles by despising them. Hence arose that tone of boasting and of presumption which he brought into fashion amongst his generals, and which, in the end, contributed not a little towards their reverses by inspiring them with a blind confidence in their superiority. Contempt of an enemy no doubt encourages audacity in war, but it also engenders negligence and fatal illusions, and it may safely be asserted that it has caused the loss of more battles than it has helped to gain. If Eugène had imitated the boastings by which it was sought to stimulate him, and if he had made his calculations on the same scale by which the

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, April 30, 1809

[2] Ibid. April 26, 1809.

Emperor asserted that he had fought as *one against seven*, he might have easily transformed his two defeats into brilliant victories. Quite incontestable is it that, though the position of our army had been most unfavourable at the beginning of this series of combats, its number, at least, had fully equalled that of the troops under Archduke Charles. It can be seen by every one of Napoleon's letters that Davout had 60,000 men, that the Bavarians united to the Würtembergers amounted to scarcely less than 50,000, that Masséna's corps, Bessières' cavalry, and Oudinot's divisions counted at least as many, and that their numbers hourly increased, whilst the Archduke had not above 130,000 men dispersed over the various battle-fields.

Napoleon, for a moment, thought of appointing Murat to the command of Eugène's army, but the arrival of Macdonald at the Viceroy's headquarters soon made him change this plan. Moreover, it was clear that the retreat of Archduke Charles would force Archduke John to retrograde upon the Noric Alps. Eugène, with so eminent a general henceforward as counsellor, was equal to the task of pursuing and harassing his antagonist. In 1809, as in 1805, the impetus of the army operating on the Danube affected all the corps that were trying to act on its flanks, and the action of the principal corps governed also the subsidiary episodes. Archduke John was irresistibly involved in his brother's rout, and the Tyrolese insurrection itself, in spite of its brilliant success, was only a digression. The Tyrol not being situated on the direct line of our communications, nor the insurgents capable of being employed elsewhere like regular troops, that revolt, if not suppressed, could at least be easily circumscribed, and allowed to exhaust itself on the spot until its ever-increasing isolation and the reaction of the great events of the war would permit it to be attacked with advantage. Meantime Lefebvre was sent to Salzburg to prevent the Tyrolese rushing down upon our flanks; no other precautions, however, were considered necessary. In Poland, Archduke Ferdinand had occupied Warsaw, and driven Poniatowski beyond the Vistula; but his very success enticed him on further than he ought to have ventured, and his influence

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on the issue of the campaign was, in consequence, but very secondary.

After having recrossed the Danube at Ratisbon, Archduke Charles had taken the road to Bohemia, intending, apparently, to fall back on Linz or Krems, provided he could precede us at either place. But he was obliged to make a long and difficult circuit by Budweis, whilst we, marching straight along the road on the right bank of the Danube, had a thousand chances in our favour of occupying these positions before him. Hiller's corps was, in fact, incapable of arresting our passage over the different tributaries of the Danube, because, by attempting to cross them in various directions, we menaced more points than he could possibly defend. It is unnecessary to seek elsewhere for the motives which determined Napoleon not to follow the Archduke into Bohemia. He would there have encountered a long and difficult route, positions to which the approach was rendered dangerous by the gorges of the Böhmer-Wald, and, moreover, have been constrained to divide his forces. By following the road along the Danube, he advanced more quickly by roads that were well known to him, preserved the advantage of concentration, had almost the certainty of reaching Vienna before his adversary, and of turning to account the great moral effect which the occupation of the enemy's capital always produces.

Napoleon immediately despatched his army at full speed on the road to Vienna. Addressing his soldiers after the taking of Ratisbon, and thanking them for their steady demeanour, he congratulated them 'for having gloriously shown the difference which existed between the soldiers of Cæsar and the cohorts of Xerxes.' If ever a comparison could be disputed it was this one, for Austria stood alone against us, while Napoleon had gathered the troops of various nations to overwhelm her. On his side he had numbers and a great mass of men; and if any one recalled Xerxes by his pride and insane ambition most assuredly it was not the modest Archduke. Unfortunately for the whole world, the new Xerxes was at the same time another Alexander. The Imperial order of the day terminated by the arrogant prediction that, 'within a month we shall be in Vienna.'

It did not however note the fact that between that town and us there were not more than about 30,000 men, scarcely capable of retarding our advance.

Hiller, after a successful retreat to the Inn, fighting on his way, recrossed that river in haste, and did not even attempt to dispute its passage with us. He resolved to stop us for some time on the Traun at Ebelsberg, the heights of which, crowned by an old castle, afforded him very strong positions. At a short distance further on was the bridge of Mauthausen on the Danube, by which it was erroneously supposed that the Archduke intended to come to Hiller's assistance. Masséna, consequently, whose army-corps, with Bessières' cavalry, formed the advance-guard, instantly issued an order to attack, although no one doubted the possibility of being able to take the Austrian positions by turning them at Lambach. General Cohorn carried the bridge and town of Ebelsberg successfully, under a fearful fire. Every house was several times taken and retaken amidst the flames which consumed the town, and he was on the point of succumbing, when the Legrand division rushed forward to his assistance over the calcined bodies of the slain. We then took the castle and definitively remained masters of the place, after one of the most sanguinary and desperate struggles mentioned in the history of that time, while the Austrians, finding their position turned by the Lambach road where Lannes' corps had passed, retreated, after first destroying the bridge at Mauthausen (May 3).

The army continued its onward march to Vienna, leaving strong detachments behind it at the principal points of Ratisbon, Passau, and Linz, intended to protect our communications and to defend the Danube against the possible return of the Archduke. The charge of guarding the course of the river was confided to Davout. After having followed the Archduke to the foot of the Böhmer-Wald, the Marshal had returned to Straubing and there closed the route of the army, but Bernadotte's expected arrival at Ratisbon would soon, it was thought, allow Napoleon to summon Davout and his corps to join him at Vienna.

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Archduke Charles had hoped to reach Krems before us, and there to assist Hiller in covering Vienna. But this illusion was speedily dispelled. In fact, it had been rendered more than ever impracticable by the time he had lost in complete inactivity at Budweis, in Bohemia. He therefore ordered his lieutenant to cross over again to the left bank of the Danube, which order Hiller, hard pressed by our advance guard, quickly obeyed, at the same time destroying the bridge at Krems, and leaving a detachment behind him with orders to repair to Vienna, there to reinforce the town militia which was preparing to defend the capital.

On the 10th of May, 1809, the French army appeared before Vienna. The old town was still encircled by the fortifications which had once withstood every attack of the Turks, but it hardly contained one third of the population of the capital, and its vast suburbs had no means of defence. The Archduke Maximilian, entrusted with the command of the place, had about fifteen thousand regular troops under his orders exclusive of the militia. He sacrificed the suburbs, entrenched himself behind the old ramparts, and proudly rejected the proposals of surrender which were made to him. But Napoleon having, after a short bombardment, thrown some light infantry into the island whereon the Prater is situated, the Archduke, seeing his communications thus endangered, evacuated the town in all haste to avoid being taken prisoner with his detachments; and our troops for the second time made their victorious entry into Vienna.

True to his old tactics of exciting the people against their sovereigns, Napoleon, with high-sounding affectation, confided the inhabitants to the humanity of his soldiers. He declared that he 'took under his special protection *that good population of Vienna, forsaken, abandoned, widowed;* that capital which the Princes of the House of Lorraine had deserted, not like soldiers of honour who yield to the circumstances and reverses of war, *but like perjurers pursued by remorse.* In flying from Vienna,' he said, 'their *farewell had been that of murder and fire; like Medea, they had slaughtered their children with their own hands.*[1]'

[1] Proclamation of May 13, 1809.

This paltry piece of tragic declamation, regarding an honourable and patriotic attempt to defend the town, could no longer deceive any one; but the more groundless were the accusations, the more exaggerated was the tone adopted in the hope of making them be believed. Napoleon supposed it possible, by dint of violence, to force a conviction on others which he did not himself share. Such epithets as ungrateful, coward, and perjurer, recurred in every line of the bulletins and proclamations respecting the Emperor of Austria. By hearing them repeated daily, the ignorant mass of the soldiery ultimately persuaded themselves that Napoleon must, in some circumstances unknown to them, have heaped benefits upon this Prince before he thus struck him; but, to have hoped to obtain credence for so improbable a story amongst nations who shared the bad fortune and insults inflicted on the Emperor Francis, required extraordinary faith in the power of charlatanism. It was carrying such faith to the extreme of folly to offer 'Independence and[1] liberty,' open handed, to the Hungarians, when the hand which proffered the gift was still red with the blood of the Spaniards; it was pushing it beyond all bounds, moreover, to use the following language in reference to the noble and generous-hearted Schill, when it became known that he had made his regiment mutiny at Berlin in order to draw it off towards Westphalia: he was spoken of as '*a man of the name of Schill, a kind of brigand, who had blackened himself with crimes in the last Prussian campaign.*'[2]

No Asiatic monarch, no human idol dispensing his oracles to prostrate multitudes, ever defined the great problems of good and evil with more placid infallibility. Good was nothing but an emanation from his own person; it consisted of everything which served his designs; evil was all that thwarted them. The actions of individuals, as of nations, were no longer judged by any standard but that of Napoleon's interests. Such was the simple and novel moral openly avowed in the Imperial manifestoes and taught to Europe at the cannon's mouth

[1] Proclamation to the Hungarians, May 15, 1809.

[2] Sixth Bulletin.

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Napoleon clearly began to believe that it required but little further effort on his part to inculcate this doctrine. The taking of Vienna had produced the moral effect he had anticipated. The news from the other armies again became excellent. Prince Eugène, with double the number of troops, pursued Archduke John, who was forced to retreat to Hungary to avoid being caught between two fires; Lefebvre beat the insurgents in the Tyrol and occupied Innspruck; Poniatowski retook Warsaw from Archduke Ferdinand, who was obliged to retire within the Austrian frontier in order to draw nearer to his brother. One more blow remained to be struck, and the dissolution of this piecemeal monarchy would assuredly follow. Flushed by hope, Napoleon thought it useless any further to delay the execution of those measures which he had been meditating against the Court of Rome. Such an act, which was more startling an account of the recollections it evoked than the changes which it would effect, seemed to him appropriately to fill up the interlude of his stay at Vienna; for it was quite in keeping with his character of Fatalist to afford the spectacle to an Empire which was itself on the point of falling, of another domination suddenly struck dead.

In consequence, he issued on the 17th of May, 1809, the famous decree which put an end to the temporal power of the Popes. He was pleased to date it from 'his Imperial Camp at Vienna,' as if to prove that the seat of his sovereignty lay wherever it suited him to establish it. He grounded the measure—very justly, however,—not upon his personal grievances, but upon the abuses which had at all times resulted from the confusion of the spiritual and the temporal power. But his silly infatuation betrayed itself in the preamble, in which he introduced 'Charlemagne, his august predecessor, Emperor of the French,' and invoked against the Sovereign Pontiffs the terms of the Carlovingian donation. This exhumation from the Gothic ages, which he thought would heighten the effect, only diminished it, by showing in what antiquated regions his imagination loved to roam. No one, moreover, could believe him sincere in his historical condemnation of the 'Bishops of Rome,' for their

history was well known to him, when he had restored their power. The recollection of their iniquities had in no wise embarrassed him when he had hoped to profit by their services. He overthrew them simply because Pius VII had not proved complaisant; and if the power he deprived them of was to increase his own, this legitimate revolution, of which he constituted himself the instrument, would become a scourge rather than a benefit.

The enacting portion of the decree contained one characteristic detail. It stated that the Pope's revenue should be increased by an annual income of two millions (Art. 5). This bait, which could be withdrawn at will, was destined according to Napoleon's idea to keep the Papacy in the right path of duty, through fear of losing so rich an endowment. Such, most certainly, was the opinion which the new Charlemagne entertained of the institution he had restored and the Pontiff by whom he had wished to be crowned. In that, however, he grossly deceived himself; yet to a certain degree it is noteworthy as the estimate of one who was so keenly alive to the weaknesses of mankind. Most incontestable is it that he thought the Prelates of the Roman Court, and the Pope himself, capable of accepting a similar bargain. 'You have seen by my Decrees,' he wrote to Murat a little later, 'that I *have behaved well to the Pope;* but it is on the condition of his remaining quiet.' From these words it is evident that his frequent intercourse with the Court of Rome had not inspired him with much esteem for those who directed it.

While these new incidents were occupying public attention, Napoleon was making every preparation for destroying the army of Archduke Charles, from which the Danube alone now separated him. The crossing of rivers in presence of the enemy has always been considered as one of the most difficult operations in war; that of the Danube, an exceptionally wide stream, would have been impracticable under the fire of so strong an army, had not the topographical circumstances peculiar to the environs of Vienna, considerably lessened the danger. Narrow, deep, and rapid up to the vicinity of the capital, no

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sooner does the Danube approach its walls than it widens and slackens its speed, embracing in its course many islands which divide its waters, so that instead of the one single obstacle of its powerful current, it presents a series of rather narrow channels, comparatively easy to cross. Two of these islands especially seemed favourable for a passage: that of Schwarze-Lake, situated in front of Vienna and opposite Nussdorf, and that of Lobau, about a league and a half further back.

Napoleon caused preparations to be made for crossing the river at both points. But the two battalions which he had sent on to take possession of Schwarze-Lake having been captured by the Austrians, he confined himself, on that side, to simple demonstrations, and concentrated all his resources for action at Lobau. The island, being a league wide and three leagues in circumference, he was enabled to quarter an army there under shelter from the enemy's guns. The Archduke had neglected to occupy it: it was consequently easy to take, and as easy to throw a bridge across the arm of the river which separated it from us and was by far the longest The channel, on the other side, separating the island from the left bank, then held by the enemy, was only 110 yards wide, and could thus be easily and rapidly crossed by a flying bridge, without any more difficulty than is experienced in the passage of an ordinary river. The obstacle was further diminished by the island forming a semicircular bend round the point from which we were to throw the bridge over, our artillery being thus enabled to render it inaccessible to the enemy. By means of the long bridge placed out of reach of all attack, of this island which could serve as a halting-place and parade-ground for his troops, and of the small bridge which could be thrown across in two or three hours, Napoleon felt certain of being able to land his army on the left bank before the Archduke, who was ignorant of the exact state of affairs, would find it possible to oppose him.

He had, it is true, just been informed that an Austrian corps d'armée had tried to cross the river at Linz and to fall upon our rear—a fact which, while it indicated that Archduke Charles

had attempted a retrograde movement in the hope of turning our flanks, proved at the same time that he had divided his forces. The Emperor instantly resolved to hasten his passage across the Danube, notwithstanding the alarming rise in its waters, which were swollen by the melting of snow in the Alps, and shook his principal bridge to an alarming degree; for though it had been laid upon very substantial boats, their fastenings were far from being strong or firm. During the afternoon of May 20 the flying bridge was constructed in three hours, and Masséna took up his position on the left bank. On the other side of a small wood, near which our troops landed, stood two pretty villages on the right and left, Aspern and Essling, destined before long to become a heap of ruins. The Boudet, Molitor, and Legrand divisions, with a portion of the Guards, there entrenched themselves without delay. These villages, joined by a canal, having in their entire length only one cross street, and possessing several buildings of substantial masonry, formed a sort of fortified front most favourable to a defensive attitude. The Archduke continued invisible the whole of that day, merely showing us a large advance-guard of cavalry which watched our movements while scouring the vast plain of the Marchfeld. On the following day, May the 21st, he decided on attacking Napoleon, before the whole of our army should have crossed over to the left bank. The inexplicable dilatoriness of his movements wellnigh cost him dear. Happily for him, our large bridge had been broken during the night, and the repairs required time, so that Napoleon, consequently, was unable to concentrate more than a portion of his forces.

The Archduke did not advance against us until very late in the day. He marched forward with about seventy thousand men and three hundred guns, forming a concentric line around the villages of Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf, in which our troops were entrenched[1]. Our forces on that first day cannot

[1] Two of his army-corps were absent, one near Linz under Kollowrath, the other before Vienna under Archduke Louis. His reserve, moreover, had remained at Breitenlee.

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be estimated at less than forty thousand men.[1] This great numerical inferiority forcibly reduced us to act on the defensive, but the two positions of Aspern and Essling having been rapidly transformed into true citadels it was not easy to dislodge from them soldiers of the description they contained, commanded too by generals such as Lannes and Masséna. Masséna had shut himself up in Aspern, and there received the first shock of the Austrian army. Assailed almost simultaneously by the two corps of Hiller and of Bellegarde, he sustained the attack with vigour, and his well-directed fire caused immense loss to the serried masses of the enemy, enclosed in a space where it was impossible to deploy. Soon, however, the Austrian columns were led on with spirit, and, making the Molitor division give way, they sprang forward and carried the village. But Masséna, entrenched within the enclosure of the cemetery, resisted with an obstinacy which nothing could shake. He despatched the Marulaz cavalry on their flanks, and the village was retaken by the Legrand division.

Lannes held Essling with the Boudet division, and with equal firmness repulsed the assaults of Rosenberg's corps. He first evacuated the village of Enzersdorf, as from the small number of his troops he did not care to defend it, but each time the Austrians advanced upon Essling they were received by a

[1] I am here in contradiction with all the French accounts, which place this number at five-and-twenty or thirty thousand. On our side there were, of infantry, the four divisions of Boudet, Molitor, Legrand, and Carra Saint Cyr. It must be explained by what impenetrable mystery these divisions, which were composed, some of three, others of two brigades—that is to say, some formed of six regiments, others of four—could have been reduced to an average of five thousand men, when, at the outset of the campaign a regiment consisted of three thousand men *present under arms*. These four divisions comprised *sixteen regiments* in all—that is to say, from thirty to thirty-two thousand men at a minimum, admitting a reduction of a thousand men per regiment. A similar calculation must be applied to the cavalry, which counted four divisions of from eight to ten thousand horse. The divisions of Lasalle and Marulaz alone included *ten cavalry regiments*, which, originally composed of a thousand men *present under arms*, must at least have still had seven or eight hundred.

shower of musketry and grape-shot that made them retire in disorder. In consequence of the failure of this double attack on our two wings, the Archduke sent Hohenzollern's corps, supported by Lichtenstein's cavalry, against our centre. While his artillery was pouring its fire upon the two villages, Hohenzollern advanced through the interval which separated them, and Bessières, at the head of all our cavalry, met these fresh columns; but in vain endeavoured to break their ranks. He stopped them, however, and then rushing past them commenced an attack upon the Austrian batteries. Lichtenstein's squadrons, meanwhile, dashed forward at full gallop and instantly engaged ours in close combat. The general of the Spanish Cuirassiers was killed, but the cavalry charges continued on both sides without any definite result. Still we were losing ground, and, little by little, were driven back into the promontory which is formed by a bend of the Danube below Essling. Meanwhile, Bellegarde and Hiller recommenced their attack against Masséna with fresh energy, and this time our troops were overthrown and the cemetery itself fell into the power of the enemy. But Masséna quickly returned at the head of the Saint Cyr and Legrand divisions, and, at the conclusion of a desperate struggle, succeeded in retaking half the village.

Night was approaching, and the Archduke suspended the combat, though, by one further effort, he would probably have driven the French army into the Danube. But this prince, though an excellent general in other respects, had none of that determined obstinacy which wrests favours from fortune whenever she shows hesitation in granting them. His manner of making war had all the carelessness of the *Grand Seigneur*. He prided himself on excessive courtesy, and adopted proceedings that would have been more appropriate to a tournament. He seemed to consider it bad taste and want of generosity to push his advantages beyond a certain limit, a capital fault when confronting an enemy who was so anxious to make the very utmost of all his gains. His cold, slow, methodical temper was a stranger to that implacable anger which never pardons an enemy, is never actuated by respect for others, nor admits of a

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compromise, and always ends by overcoming opposition; for victory bestows herself on the strongest will far oftener than upon those who have the greatest skill. Even at the beginning of the campaign, when there had been a question as to the exchange of prisoners, he had overwhelmed his conqueror with exaggerated compliments, which were only met by contemptuous silence. This first day he missed the opportunity of making Napoleon expiate one of the greatest acts of imprudence he had committed during all his military career. In fact, if our army was obliged to fight with insufficient numbers, that fault could only be attributed to the temerity of a plan that was unworthy of the Emperor's genius. The extraordinary rise of the Danube sufficiently indicated the probable breaking up of the long-bridges. With greater foresight and more solicitude for the lives of his soldiers, Napoleon should then have done what he did later, namely, not have allowed them to cross over to the left bank until he had collected in the isle of Lobau, beyond reach of any accident to the long bridge, a number of troops sufficient to ensure victory.

Unfortunately it was rather too late to recognise this truth, of which the following day afforded striking confirmation. Large bodies of troops crossed over during the night, including the four divisions of Lannes' corps, two brigades of cavalry, and the guard which numbered twenty-two thousand at the commencement of the campaign, and which had not been in any battle up to that moment. They amounted to at least as many as had been engaged the day before, which, allowing for losses, does not permit the total to be lower than from 75,000 to 80,000 men; but the long bridge again broke in two during the night, and a part of our artillery remained behind, on the right bank, with Davout's corps. The communication was restored, it is true, at early morn, and the passage recommenced, but not without having caused a disastrous delay.

Towards three o'clock on the morning of the 22nd of May the two armies, after bivouacking opposite to each other, again took up arms. The firing began at dawn in Aspern, occupied half by French and half by Austrians. Supported by

fresh troops, Masséna, at the point of the bayonet, attacked Hiller's and Bellegarde's regiments which had taken up a position in the village, and, successively capturing the cemetery and the church, drove them back upon their line of battle. Essling, entrusted to the Boudet division, as yet only suffered from a severe cannonade. The enemy's line, from Aspern to Enzersdorf, still formed, as on the previous day, a vast semicircle around us, from which all its fire converged upon our centre. Napoleon, however, was not now in that state of inactivity which had occasioned so much loss the evening before. The enemy's line was too extended to be very firm. He therefore resolved to push through the centre of it, and selected Lannes to inflict that blow upon the Archduke which was intended to cut his army in two.

No one was more capable of comprehending and executing this great manœuvre than this intrepid commander. Lannes sallied forth from between the two villages with an irresistible mass of men, composed of the two divisions of Oudinot and of Saint-Hilaire, and several divisions of cavalry under the orders of Bessières. His columns being too deep suffered severely at first, but they deployed as they advanced and marched straight upon Breitenlee, where the Archduke's head quarters were established. The Hohenzollern corps, which tried to bar our passage, was partially overthrown, and fell back on Breitenlee, receiving our cavalry charges bravely. The artillery line, which made such sad havoc in our ranks, was broken, and Lannes continued to advance upon the Austrian centre, until the Archduke, rushing forward with a flag in his hand, rallied his soldiers and brought up his reserve of grenadiers. Some of our squadrons were actually commencing a charge upon Breitenlee when Lannes, to his great surprise, suddenly perceived that he was unsupported. The Archduke's centre was falling back before us, but if we went further his wings would close upon our flanks in the space which we should have been obliged to leave uncovered. Moreover, the Marshal soon received an order to retire to Essling, for Napoleon had learned that the principal bridge was again broken. He was thus forced to abandon all hope of support from Davout, and the necessity

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of maintaining his communications with the island of Lobau chained him to the positions at Aspern and Essling. The two wings of our army having thus to remain inactive, Lannes' movement had only been an eccentric manœuvre without any result.

Certain it is, however, that if this movement by Lannes had thrown the enemy into 'a most fearful rout,' as Napoleon asserted in his bulletin, and later in his notes on the battle of Essling, the Emperor would not have hesitated to complete such a rout by the movement of his whole army, even at the risk of exposing his communications; for a similar apprehension had never stopped him when he believed himself to be on the point of succeess. Lannes' manœuvre had been brilliantly executed, but it could not have been crowned with success except at the cost of a long and sanguinary struggle, for which the presence of Davout's corps was essential. The news which obliged us to retreat soon spread through both armies, causing consternation amongst our soldiers and reviving the ardour of our adversaries. Lannes fell slowly back on Essling, closely pressed by the same troops whom he had a short time before been chasing before him. In this retrograde movement, Saint-Hilaire, one of the bravest and most highly esteemed amongst our generals, was mortally wounded. The enemy made several vain attempts to attack the three divisions which Lannes was leading back to Napoleon, but re-forming their line of artillery their fire soon caused fearful havoc in our ranks.

It being henceforth impossible to continue the battle according to any combined plan of action on our side, the conditions of the previous day had to be resumed, namely, an obstinate defence behind the crumbling houses of the villages of Aspern and Essling. Sharply attacked by the Austrian columns, who felt the necessity of a sovereign effort in order to ensure victory, these two spots were taken, retaken, and disputed inch by inch amidst fearful scenes of confusion, despair, and carnage. The houses and the streets were encumbered with dead: the wounded everywhere falling upon

those who had died there the day before. Essling was five times carried by the Austrians, and five times were they driven from it. The direct attacks against our centre, where Lannes resumed his position of the morning, was not more decisive. Hohenzollern's corps and Lichtenstein's cavalry here met the same divisions they had encountered on the plain of the Marchfeld: they could not, however, force that point on which our safety depended, though unconsciously inflicting upon us a loss which was worse than a defeat; for Marshal Lannes fell, having both knees fractured by a cannon ball. At that same moment Rosenberg succeeded by a dashing attack in making himself master of Essling, capturing the scattered remnants of the Boudet division and there entrenching himself with the Archduke's reserves. Our soldiers were by this time driven towards the narrow peninsula where they soon found themselves close to the river. But happily General Mouton—known to our generation by the name of Count Lobau—quickly advanced at the head of the fusiliers of the guard. Nothing could resist his cool intrepidity; he charged the Austrians at the point of the bayonet, and drove them back in turn to the further extremity of the village.

This last incident disheartened the enemy, who thenceforth contented himself with cannonading us from a distance. Not having succeeded in ousting us from these positions on the previous day, when his forces were numerically superior to ours, he gave up all hope of accomplishing that object now that our numbers nearly equalled his own. His artillery however—but feebly answered by our guns from dread of failure in ammunition—created fearful havoc in our ranks, and prolonged the fatal losses of the battle long after the cessation of the combat.

The last two days of Aspern and Essling formed one of the most sanguinary affairs of the century, though without achieving any very marked result for either side. This very absence of any result, however, was for Napoleon a serious check, and in this respect the battle of Essling can only be compared to that of Eylau. He was forced to make a

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retrograde movement, to abandon the left bank of the Danube for the possession of which he had shed so much blood, and by this alone everything was left doubtful. He found it impossible for some time to come to talk, without risk of ridicule, of the *Austrian canaille*. Archduke Charles, on the second day, had proved himself to be as valiant a soldier as he was a distinguished general; but it was no longer in his power to repair the fault he had committed on the first by his slowness and the feebleness of his attacks against an army which was not then in a state to resist him.

As night descended Napoleon made his troops cross back into the Isle of Lobau. This island afforded them a kind of entrenched camp of almost impregnable strength; its shores were covered with batteries that swept the left bank of the Danube. Davout's divisions lined the right bank. They were soon to join hands with Prince Eugène who was marching up with the army of Italy. Bernadotte's and Lefebvre's corps guarded the course of the river from the neighbourhood of Vienna on to Bavaria. The provisioning of Lobau was certain from its proximity to the Austrian capital; therefore, if necessary, they could stay there for many months. This post was confided to Masséna, whose indomitable strength of mind had never excited the admiration of the army more than during the perils of these two days.

As Napoleon was crossing to the island of Lobau, he espied the litter upon which lay his old companion in arms, Lannes, whose leg had just been amputated. Rushing towards him, he embraced him vehemently. Next day he went to see him in a house at Ebersdorf whither the Marshal had been carried. It is said that the dying man, on recovering from a long swoon, the precursor of his last sleep, cast looks upon the Emperor that were no longer those either of servant or friend, but of a judge. In presence of that great mystery which dissipates all human illusions, and having no further desire to disguise the truth, Lannes repelled the words of consolation the hollowness of which he well knew. He burst forth into bitter complaints against the ambition and insensibility of the

reckless gambler, in whose eyes men were but so much ready coin, to be risked without scruple and lost without remorse. Lannes had been a republican; he had continued an ardent patriot; and more than once had displeased his master by the boldness of his censures and by the disapprobation of his mien in the midst of a servile court. The words attributed to him in his last moments are, therefore, very much in keeping with his character, and Napoleon's passionate denial of them only serves to make them more probable. But, as there were no avowed witnesses present at the interview, this point must always remain matter of conjecture.[1]

A horrible massacre of not less than fifty thousand men killed in one single encounter, with no other result than to furnish flourishes in bulletins; fortune again made uncertain; nations disquieted, agitated by the breath of liberty and awaiting a signal in order to rush to arms; Napoleon arrested in his course and held in check by an adversary who was astonished at not having been beaten;—such were the unexpected, stirring incidents which Europe now watched with the most anxious attention, its eyes fixed on that obscure island where its destinies were soon to be, for a second time, at stake. Whilst the different nations were questioning themselves as to the issue of the great duel, another actor had already appeared on the scene. Far away, at the other extremity of the horizon, on the confines of that land of marvels called Spain, a tumultuous mass might be discerned, drawing nearer and growing larger from hour to hour. It is Wellington's army, advancing from Portugal, and driving before it the legions commanded by Soult.

[1] This conversation was reported in accordance with the accounts of friends who attended Lannes, by Cadet de Gassicourt, entrusted with the embalming of the Marshal's body. (*Voyage en Autriche en 1809 à la suite des armées françaises.*) The denial given to it by General Petit in his *Mémoires sur la guerre de 1809*, has no weight, as it does not refer to the scene of which Cadet de Gassicourt speaks, but to Napoleon's first interview with the wounded Marshal.

CHAPTER XIII.

STATE OF EUROPE AND OF GERMANY DURING THE CAMPAIGN OF 1809.—POPE PIUS VII CARRIED AWAY FROM ROME.—BATTLE OF WAGRAM.—ARMISTICE OF ZNAIM. (*June—July*, 1809.)

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THE signal failure at Essling presented a rare opportunity to Napoleon's enemies for striking a dangerous, if not a fatal, blow at his power. Without having been exactly conquered, he had been forced to retrograde, to modify his plans, and, for a time at least, to abandon that offensive line of action which was so consonant to his genius, so dear to his pride. Though he had not been subjected to the humiliation of a defeat, his schemes had nevertheless been foiled, his prestige injured, and his position endangered. He had partly lost that wonderful strength derived from public opinion, which he had hitherto wielded like a talisman, and, for the moment, he was rendered incapable of undertaking anything. The two days at Essling had shown the fragile nature of all his much-vaunted glory and power, of his grand projects and great good fortune. The crossing of a river had wellnigh swept them away; in fact, one effort more would suffice to drive the hero of so many exploits into the waters of the Danube. Isolated, surrounded by enemies, amidst a population that was ready to revolt, and at an immense distance from his natural basis of support, it now seemed as though the mere possibility of his downfall, so long and ardently desired, would in itself cause a universal uprising against him.

From a military point of view it henceforth became clear that the passage of the Danube, in presence of a numerous and warlike army, was not one of those operations which could be achieved by pure audacity. It was an undertaking brimful of peril, requiring all the energy and mental resources of a great captain for its successful execution, and so difficult as almost to restore the balance between the two combatants. So long too as this operation was incomplete, the results of our previous victories continued doubtful. Every one instinctively felt,—in accordance with the well-known adage,—that in war nothing is done while anything remains to be done. Napoleon, it was said, had at length met with that obstacle which, sooner or later, the all-powerful of this world always do encounter: he had come across that grain of sand which makes even the most invincible stumble—nay, more, the Empire itself was at stake.

The mere fact of such doubts arising in the public mind produced symptoms of dissolution everywhere, and proved how artificial and unstable was the work of this modern Cæsar. Attempts at insurrection became numerous in Germany. Our allies of the Confederation of the Rhine, who fought unwillingly in our ranks, were ready to turn against us those arms which we had forced them to use against their country. Our other allies, the Russians, partially reconciled with Austria on account of the insurrection we had disloyally provoked in Gallicia, seemed more inclined to occupy themselves with the Poles than to support us. Prussia, undecided, but permanently hostile, was only watching for some more decided reverse to declare herself openly. England had finished her preparations for a great expedition, the precise object of which was still a mystery, although its destination was not doubtful. Affairs in Spain were taking a vexatious turn, and boded fresh disasters to our armies. The Pope was preparing to excommunicate the spoliators of the Holy See. The Tyrolese insurrection, subdued for the time, was smouldering like a half-extinguished fire. Lastly, France herself was discontented and alarmed. Napoleon's danger was exaggerated there. The French supposed that he was surrounded in the Isle of Lobau, whereas he had never

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ceased to command the right bank of the Danube, and the very original manœuvre, which had again given him—as it did in the marshes of Arcolea—an almost impregnable camp, seemed at a distance only an expedient rendered necessary by his distress.

It were impossible to deny that there was sufficient in all these elements of material and moral force successfully to counterbalance the enormous advantages Napoleon possessed in the superiority of his army and in his own military talents. But would his adversaries know how to combine and set in motion these scattered resources?—to seize the opportunity, to understand the value of time, to profit by the lessons of the past, to gather their forces into one phalanx—in a word, to borrow from their terrible enemy, were it but for an instant, the tactics which had succeeded so marvellously in his hands? Such were the questions which agitated the public mind and which the spectators of this great duel asked each other in every quarter of the world.

The auxiliaries upon whose assistance Austria had a right to count, being dispersed over vast distances could alone remedy their want of cohesion by the utmost activity, promptitude and union. In all these respects their efforts had hitherto been fruitless; but this was only an additional motive for now urging them to make use of the time afforded by the forced halt of the French army in the Isle of Lobau. Germany was ripe for insurrection, owing to the unceasing labours of the *Tugendbund* and secret societies. Even the women everywhere constituted themselves agents of this conspiracy, universally wearing its badges, moreover, and adopting ornaments in steel as symbols of the regeneration they expected by means of iron[1]. It is true that neither the localities nor the manners, habits, or characters of the Germans were adapted to the same kind of insurrectionary movements which we had found it so difficult to suppress in Spain. Proofs of this had occurred since the opening of the campaign, when the suc-

[1] See the curious Memoirs of Beugnot, who was at that period administrator of the Grand Duchy of Berg.

cessive attempts made by Dornberg in Westphalia, by Katt at Magdeburg, by the chivalrous Schill at Berlin, failed through want of harmony in the arrangements, or rather from the utter deficiency of ground favourable to partisan warfare. None the less were they a significant sign of the new-born feelings that were agitating a population ordinarily so peaceful. The instrument for liberation existed—the mode for setting it in motion was alone needed; and, if instead of these desultory, ill-timed insurrections, one single combined movement could be organized, if discipline could be enforced, or any one government would venture to assume the leadership, it might be possible to give these outbreaks an impulse which would carry all before them. Who can say what effect might not have been produced in Germany by the landing of English troops, who, starting from the mouth of the Elbe and following the course of that river, would have fallen upon our communications, whilst their bold native partisans, seeing their own efforts thus ably seconded, would have made the people rise throughout the length and breadth of the land?

Schill appears to have expected and appealed for a diversion of this nature, when, after having for an instant menaced the frontiers of Westphalia and of the Grand Duchy of Berg, he turned off abruptly to the Hanseatic towns. But the hoped-for succour did not come. Schill had been too precipitate, and with his life he paid the forfeit of his generous error. Disowned by his country, branded as a deserter by the Prussian government, described as a brigand in Napoleon's bulletins, outlawed by King Jerome, who thus revenged himself for the fear he had experienced when forced to set a price on his enemy's head,[1] pursued by the Danish troops and the columns of General Gratien, Schill fell like a hero beneath the walls of Stralsund. He was loaded with official opprobrium, it is true, but it was of that kind which time changes into the purest glory, and nothing could deprive him of the everlasting honour of being the first, if not the grandest, of those proud martyrs whose blood was the ransom of their German Fatherland (May 31, 1809).

[1] By a Decree, dated Cassel, May 5, 1809.

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Schill's companions were sent to the galleys at Toulon by order of Napoleon. The *Moniteur* had the audacity to announce later that, 'the men belonging to Schill's band who have not been killed have been taken to the galleys in Toulon, to the number of three hundred and sixty. . . . . All who consider that they, although they follow that trade, differ from ordinary robbers, because they have worn a uniform, merely deserve contempt.' But neither ignominious treatment of this sort, nor the recollection of their leader's tragic end, in any degree stopped the springs of such noble self-sacrifice. The standard which dropped from Schill's dying hands was at once raised by the Duke of Brunswick-Oels, son of the brave warrior who was defeated at Jena. In despite, therefore, of these first reverses, which had only proved the inefficiency of partial efforts, nothing was in reality lost, and the chances of a great German insurrection continued almost entirely open to whoever might know how to use them. However, it must here be admitted that Austria could hardly take the lead, struggling as she then was with the iron hand which lay so heavily upon her. England or Prussia were more fitted for such a post, both powers being, equally with Austria, interested in Napoleon's defeat. England had already paid, and was still paying, her debt to the cause of European liberty more largely than any other nation. Her inexhaustible subsidies belonged to whoever would take them, and for many years past had flowed like a river of gold into the exhausted treasuries of the Continent, while her fleets, without truce or intermission, blockaded all the coasts of Europe. In Spain she had done far more, for her army had there become the very mainspring of resistance, the solid centre round which the revolutionary forces gathered. In Italy her expeditions kept Murat in a constant state of alarm. The enormous preparations which she was now making against France, intended for some point as yet unknown, might prove of inestimable value to Germany, provided two conditions were observed; first, that the point of attack be well chosen, secondly, that the diversion be effected in time. From these two points of view, so far as it was possible to judge by appearances, the gigantic

enterprise boded ill. A selfish wish to destroy our establishment at Antwerp made the leaders of the expedition lose sight of the necessity of concentrating all their forces on the principal scene of action, in order to strike the decisive blow there. Holland, where according to some they intended to effect a powerful diversion, was too peculiar a battle-field, or too easily defended, to admit the possibility of any victory which might there be gained, exercising marked influence on the ultimate issue of the war. Germany alone, in the space comprised between the Elbe and the Weser, offered the requisite base of operation. Hanover, the cradle of the British dynasty, would have risen at the first signal; Prussia, still wavering, would have been carried along; Jerome's feeble royalty would have fallen in an instant, and no barrier have stemmed the torrent of the advance up to the Danube. The organizers of the expedition not only failed to take these advantages into account, but appear not even to have understood the necessity of prompt decision. Their dilatoriness threatened to render useless the invaluable respite which a doubtful battle had afforded them. Days and weeks passed by, and Austria, in the extremity of despair, uttered cries of distress,—yet the same mystery still continued to hang over the destination of the English expedition.

But whatever the shortcomings, voluntary or involuntary, of the British Cabinet, by far the largest portion of responsibility for the coming events devolves upon the Prussian Government. Not only had Prussia ardently longed for the present war, but she had powerfully contributed to the organization of the great conspiracy of the secret societies against Napoleon. Her statesmen, her generals, her officials of every class filled the ranks of the *Tugendbund*. Schill was the friend and brother of the Steins, the Scharnhorsts, the Blüchers. The whole army was burning to avenge the humiliations of Jena. Far from encountering any obstacle to their projects in the feelings of the people, the Prussian Cabinet found more difficulty in repressing than in exciting them. Our diplomatic agents, the generals and commanders of the fortresses we still occupied in Prussia—from Rapp at Dantzic to Michaud at Magdeburg—

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were unanimous in testifying to the sentiments of hatred and deep enmity borne us by the Prussian nation. The government kept them under control for the moment, merely by deceiving the population with the prospect of imminent war. The King's tendencies, though he still lived at Königsberg, were not more doubtful than those of his ministry, who sat at Berlin.

So thoroughly did the Cabinet of Vienna rely on the concurrence of Prussia, that the great importance given to the detachment sent to Poland under the Archduke Ferdinand was principally due to this alliance. And when the Archduke, after having driven Poniatowski beyond the Vistula, advanced towards the frontiers of Old Prussia, receding at every step from his base of operation, he did so in the hope of soon joining hands with the Prussian armies. This hope, too, was grounded on positive assurances. The Prince of Orange had been the bearer of formal promises of speedy co-operation from King Frederick William to the Emperor of Austria, and after Essling Francis II considered that the moment had come to demand their performance. He sent Colonel Steigentesch to Königsberg with a letter[1] in which he recalled to the King of Prussia the assurances he had received from him, the identity of interest which united Prussia to Austria, and the necessity for prompt and energetic decision if they wished to put an end 'to the invasions and spoliations of the Emperor Napoleon.' That the hour for such a decision had come, no one could deny. But Frederick William, a petty and undecided character, now showed the same want of resolution which he had shown at the period of Austerlitz. Suddenly confronted by the crisis which he had himself evoked, he grew troubled, hesitated, and endeavoured to hide his embarrassment by receiving the Colonel with excessive coldness and a reserve almost amounting to mistrust. He pretended to fear that 'if once engaged, Austria might abandon him in order to make a separate peace.' And when Steigentesch expressed his astonishment at having a question discussed which he thought

[1] Dated June 8, 1809.

was settled, the King betrayed the secret of his wavering by answering, that, 'The time has not yet come. . . . . If I were to declare myself now it would be my ruin. Strike one more blow, and I will come; but I will not come alone.'[1]

No language could more clearly express his willingness to share the fruits of victory, but not the risks of battle. In this way the best chances of Napoleon's adversaries vanished one by one. The revolutionary enthusiasm of Germany spent itself in feverish and useless agitation. Prussian irritation exhausted itself in inactive and idle expectation, while British egotism advanced too slowly, and laid the foundation of fresh mistakes from having been too careful of its own interests. The only succour which Austria obtained, at the time when she most needed support, was from a co-operation, which in such critical circumstances, however, could not be of the slightest value. The Decree of Schönbrunn, which announced the union of the Papal States to the French Empire, having been published in Rome on the 18th of June, 1809, Pius VII at length resolved to fulminate against Napoleon the Bull of Excommunication long since drawn up, and which timidity alone had hitherto prevented him from issuing. At the conclusion of a long discussion, in which indignation, anguish, anger, fear, and all the most opposite sentiments were displayed, the feeble old man, at the instance of Cardinal Pacca made up his mind to launch his anathema and denounce to the Catholic world the man whose fatal power he had so much contributed to strengthen. A touching spectacle, no doubt, if nothing else is to be seen in it but weakness struggling with force, but one full of salutary instruction for those who look upon it from a higher point of view.

Looking on Pius VII merely as a defenceless old man opposed to a powerful and implacable foe, it is difficult not to yield to the pity naturally inspired by real misfortune. But think of him as the spiritual head of millions, the father of their consciences, and, as it were, the representative of God on

[1] Despatch of Baron von Linden, Minister of Westphalia at Berlin, to Count Fürstenstein.

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earth, and it is impossible not to feel that his conduct must be viewed otherwise, and to ask what use he made of such unparalleled authority. It can never be wrong to judge a historical character from the point of view of the duties attached to his office and his person. Now Pius VII solemnly ignored and neglected his duty when at the coronation he shared in the most questionable enterprises of the man whom he was now opposing. All Napoleon's usurpations at home and abroad, his *coups d'état*, treasons, and barbarities, even the murder of the Duc d'Enghien, he had condoned, with that profound indifference to morality which the clergy too often manifest when forced to choose between justice and the interests of religion. As long as he hoped to profit by so powerful an alliance he sanctioned everything. He threw the pontifical ægis round one who was both perjurer and murderer, and exerted all his moral force in protecting him against the lovers of justice. What had he to complain of now? He was but suffering from the same law which he had found fair and legitimate for others.

The consequences and punishment of such conduct were visible in the indifference with which both the downfall and the protests of the Pope were received. The pontifical thunder no longer, as of old, drowned the din of war. The anathema was lost amid the tumult of events which absorbed the attention of Europe; and if somewhat later public sympathy returned by degrees to Pius VII, it was due less to his character as Supreme Head of the Church, than to the patience, simplicity, and unalterable gentleness he displayed in the course of his long trials. Moreover, it became evident from the very beginning of his disputes with Napoleon, that the simple fact of his refusing to submit to the position assigned him rendered his residence in Rome impossible. Accustomed to obtain everything he wished for from the Holy See, either by menace or through fear, Napoleon seemed to have at first calculated upon the Pope's resignation. The salary of two millions which the Decree of Schönbrunn added to the pontifical revenue appeared to him a sufficient guarantee for the docility of Pius VII. On the 17th of June he wrote to Murat, 'You have seen by my

decrees *that I have behaved well to the Pope*, but it is on the condition of his keeping quiet. But if he chooses to collect intriguers at Rome like Cardinal Pacca,' he then added, '*it will be necessary to act in Rome*, as I should act towards the Archbishop of Paris.' Two days later, on the 19th of June, no further illusion was possible, for Napoleon necessarily knew, at that date, of the excommunication published on the 10th of the same month, and of the protests which had been then made public. At all events on that day he gave instructions to Murat and to General Miollis which were so applicable to their actual position as to leave them no hesitation how to act. 'I have already informed you,' he wrote to Murat, 'that I intended the affairs of Rome to be dealt with vigorously, and no consideration accorded to any species of resistance. *No asylum must be respected* if my decrees are not submitted to, and under no pretext whatsoever must resistance be permitted. Should the Pope preach revolt, and wish to make use of the immunity of his house *in order to print circulars*, he must be arrested.'[1] General Miollis received instructions in the same sense and dated the same day.[2]

It was impossible to point in more precise terms to the contingency which had arisen. The order even went farther than this special case that had just occurred at Rome, for it authorized arrest for the simple fact of printing *circulars*, and what had now been published was an excommunication. Strange and remarkable is it, however, that on this, as on almost every occasion when he had to adopt a resolution with which he felt posterity might some day reproach him, Napoleon, usually so imperative in his style and tone, expressed himself conditionally; invariably contriving to have the possibility of saying, 'It is not I!' His order, in the present instance, though formal, was couched in general terms, as though he sought to throw the responsibility of the undertaking upon his agents.

This supposition is justified, moreover, by the fact that no sooner had the event taken place than he washed his hands of

[1] Napoleon to Murat, June 19, 1809.

[2] Napoleon to Miollis, June 19, 1809.

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it, repudiated it, condemned it, nay more, deplored it, writing of it to Fouché as 'an act of great folly, for which I am very sorry.'[1] He even expressed himself more strongly to Cambacérès, saying, 'It was without my orders and against my will that they made the Pope quit Rome.'[2] But he took good care not to undo the deed; for he wrote again, 'What is done, is done!' In the notes he dictated at St. Helena he endeavours to prove the necessity for the act, but he none the less casts all the responsibility upon the zeal of his agents.[3]

It remains to be explained how the singular phenomenon occurred, that when everything was inclining more and more towards passive obedience,—to a degree that almost paralysed his best generals,—agents ordinarily most servile, suddenly became bold the instant it was a question which might cost them their heads! Unfortunate agents! always over zealous! and precisely in the most important circumstances; in those most calculated to perplex them, and to deter them from deciding for themselves! In the affair of the Duc d'Enghien, it was Savary's zeal; in the Spanish affairs, Murat's zeal; in the Pope's affairs, Miollis' zeal, which had spoiled everything. It is evident, no doubt, that they never suffered for such zeal; quite the contrary. Their master never punished them for it, except by fresh favours! None the less, it is a special feature in his star; for Napoleon, according to his own shewing, was always compromised by too much zeal, though such things happen to no one else!

It must however be stated in vindication of these agents, that they could not have acted with greater assurance and decision, had they received the most positive and circumstantial orders from him, and it is impossible not to admit that they were more or less interested in making no mistake. The instructions addressed to Murat and to Miollis were dated the 19th of June. On the 6th of July following, between two and three o'clock in the morning, at the same nocturnal hour which had been

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, July 18, 1809.

[2] Napoleon to Cambacérès, July 23, 1809.

[3] Notes upon the 'Four Concordats' of the Abbé de Pradt, by Napoleon.

chosen for the treachery of Ettenheim, three detachments of French soldiers, led by General Radet, escaladed the walls of the Quirinal, and disarmed the Pope's guards. The General forced his way with some officers into the apartments of the Holy Father, summoned him in the name of the Emperor to renounce his temporal power for ever, and on his refusing, announced to him that he had orders to carry him away prisoner. One of the witnesses of this lamentable act of violence testifies that the aged man, then making bitter reference to the past, exclaimed with a groan, 'This then is the gratitude your Emperor shows for all that I have done for him! this the reward of my great condescension towards him, and towards the Church of France.'[1]

A few minutes afterwards, Pope Pius VII was rapidly hurried off to Florence in a carriage, the doors of which were locked, and surrounded by an escort of gendarmes.

The only country in Europe where this event might have produced an immediate reaction was Italy. But the government of the priests was too much detested there, and fear of reprisals on our part too deeply impressed on the mind of the population by various sanguinary lessons, to permit of any insurrection taking place. From the instant that the Archduke John had been forced, in support of his brother, to retreat from the Adige towards the Alps, all danger of this description had ceased to exist in the Peninsula; and the feeble symptoms of revolt which had manifested themselves in some quarters, especially at Padua, had given way to submission and habitual silence. Nor could the expeditions which the English were preparing at Palermo cause alarm on this ground; for, although sufficient to disquiet and harass Murat, they afforded no *point d'appui* for a movement of any consistency or strength. In fact, no diversion likely to compromise our affairs took place in Italy; less even than in Germany. Spain, on the other hand, was engaged at this particular moment in the most serious

[1] See and compare, regarding these events, the Memoirs of Cardinal Paeca, the two accounts by General Radet, and the very full account by Count d'Haussonville: *L'Eglise Romaine et le premier Empire.*

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struggle that had as yet been undertaken against the French domination; distance, moreover, deprived Wellington's efforts of all direct influence on the issue of the war in Austria, and it was not until much later that his influence came to be strongly felt in the affairs of Europe. The Iberian peninsula, in fact, was nothing more, at that period, than a tilt-yard, where the combatants were left to themselves, with no possible power of assisting allies at remote distances. Their labours and their trials, moreover, require to be recounted separately.

This short statement shows that Austria, though having so much reason to hope for external aid and to count upon the support of those nations whose cause she was upholding, was nevertheless in the end obliged to rely upon herself alone—a basis, however, which is always the safest, especially for those states whose national existence is in any way menaced. Unfortunately she was ill-adapted for a war of independence; paying in this respect a double penalty, that of her past and of her vicious organization. Essentially and by nature a federal state, Austria had, thanks to the traditional despotism of her monarchy, become an almost united empire. But the cohesion due to this was thoroughly artificial, maintained by force alone, and produced, as a natural consequence, a great decrease of patriotic sentiment in the majority of her provinces, except perhaps in those which shared with the Imperial house in the benefits of so vast an administration. Hungary in particular, less exposed to the evils of invasion and less influenced by the fear of conquest, was far from shewing that formidable military ardour of which she had given proof under Maria Theresa. The rising against the French on her territory, formed by a kind of militia which was called out in time of war, and on which great hopes had rested, advanced but slowly, and with inertness. Gallicia, a far more recent possession and the result of the partition of Poland, was only waiting for a signal to revolt against masters who were not yet firmly established there. The Tyrol alone, where the Bavarian yoke was hated, showed enthusiasm befitting the circumstances. In every other part of the kingdom, what-

ever was not a strictly organized force, lacked the elasticity and energy necessary to a nation desirous of saving herself.

In such a state of things but little effective support could be expected from the militia. At all times it is a force created by public spirit, and even when upheld by patriotic sentiment never offers much resistance. Little able as a rule to confront regular troops, it now boasted but very moderate military feeling, and the Archduke Charles was not the man capable of infusing into it the fire and ardour which it so much needed. His genius, essentially methodical and cold, was incapable of the conceptions requisite for a war based on enthusiasm. In the campaign which had just ended at Essling, he had always been making preparations for attack, whilst obliged to end by fighting on the defensive. His confusion when confronted by Napoleon amounted to paralysis of his otherwise remarkable faculties, and he found it impossible to conceal the secret cause of his agitation even from his inferiors: 'But, Monseigneur!' exclaimed his aide-de-camp, General Bubna, at Ratisbon; 'imagine, that instead of Napoleon you have Jourdan before you.'[1] At Essling the Archduke had risen in his own estimation as well as in that of the army, but instead of deriving more courage and activity from this success, he only considered himself fortunate in having gained a victory over an adversary who inspired him with profound admiration, and he dreaded compromising it by too much boldness.

His army continued to occupy its old positions opposite the Isle of Lobau, although somewhat modified by the experience gained in the recent combats. He joined the three villages of Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf by a line of entrenchments mounted with artillery. This fortified line, however, threatened but one side of the island. That which extended from Enzersdorf to Mulheiten, at the bend of the Danube, upwards of a mile in length, was left uncovered, although it would have been easy to make it equally unapproachable.

The gap thus formed allowed Napoleon to take this for-

[1] Memoirs of Marmont.

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tified line by a flank movement, by which single defect all the defences were rendered useless. Its object, therefore, seemed to be to attract Napoleon to a battle-field selected and studied beforehand, rather than absolutely to bar the passage to him. The strategic positions which extended from the Bisamberg to Wagram and to Neusiedel had in fact been long known to him. Long prior to the battle of Essling, and before he had the least idea of the indelible mark they were to make on his military career, the Archduke had quoted them in his work on tactics as model positions for defending the passage of a river. It could not have escaped his notice that the plain of the Marchfeld remained accessible to Napoleon, but he had contracted the opening to it and left him a free passage only on one side, so that he might be enabled to surprise him and drive him back anew to the Danube, before the completion of his operation.

Besides these precautions, which the results proved were insufficient, he called in every detachment of which he thought it possible to dispose without injury to other important points. But this concentration was not carried out with that harmony or decision which the circumstances demanded. The Archduke Ferdinand was left in Poland, with a far larger number of troops than was required to keep Poniatowski in check. Archduke John,—who, after having failed to effect his junction with his brother at Linz had retreated to Koermond,—was completely guided by his own inspirations; and as this prince, jealous of his brother's fame, was burning to create more solid claims to military renown than the victory at Sacile, it was to be feared that his turbulent personality might cause misfortunes similar to those at Hohenlinden.

Harassed in his retreat by Prince Eugène's corps, Archduke John had only collected on his road the remnants of Jellachich's troops, which had with difficulty escaped Lefebvre's pursuit in the mountains of the Tyrol. He brought back but twenty-five thousand men to Koermond, where, however, he received some reinforcements from the Hungarian insurrection. But instead of withdrawing speedily to Presburg, whence he

could easily have joined his brother, while occupying a position of the utmost importance to the ulterior operations of the campaign, he thought only of resuming the offensive on his own account, without attending either to his instructions or to the necessity of subordinating his operations to those of the chief army.

Whilst Napoleon's adversaries were frittering away precious time in inaction, in uncertainty, in ill-judged arrangements, and all the languor of endless procrastination,—thus losing advantages of which they recognised the true value only too late,—their enemy displayed an activity in collecting and multiplying his resources, which was stimulated by the sentiment of the dangers he had momentarily been exposed to. In the same degree that their resolutions were vague and their efforts desultory, his were precise, rapid, and directed straight to their object. Long since familiar with their lack of initiative and of vigour, with their tergiversations and their secret divisions which he had himself fomented, he had said to himself from the outset that, even putting matters at the worst and supposing that they were determined to go on to the very end, still he would gain upon them by quickness, and, if he could succeed in destroying the army of Archduke Charles in time, the insurrection which they were trying to create in Germany would either fall of itself or be of no importance. Insensible to his brother Jerome's cries of distress, he endeavoured to reassure him and to revive his energies, even whilst refusing to send him the reinforcements he demanded: 'The English are not to be feared; all their troops are in Spain and Portugal. They can do nothing in Germany; even so, *it will be time enough when they come!* . . . As to Schill, he need not be thought of, now that he has retreated towards Stralsund. Brunswick has not eight hundred men. Before making a movement, it is necessary to see clearly . . . . *I always wait until an affair is ripe and I understand it well, before making any manœuvre.* . . . Take things more quietly; you have nothing to fear; it is all mere noise.'

Example could not have been better united to precept than

[1] Napoleon to Jerome, June 9, 1809.

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by the Emperor at this moment. Never had the maxim of sacrificing the accessory to the principal, of which his military conceptions afford so many admirable examples, been applied with more activity and fitness; never had this rule, which is true in every art, but truer perhaps in the art of war than in any other, been better understood, nor proof before given that the sacrifice it involves is all the more meritorious in war, from the fact that it demands strength of mind quite as much as vigour of intellect. The complications which he most feared were to him, for the moment, as though they did not exist. No secondary event had power to draw him off from the great task he had primarily assigned to himself. In view of so many threatening contingencies, of surprises which became more probable from day to day, another man would have lost his head, or have wasted time in false moves, superfluous precautions, and premature measures; but he never allowed these to occupy his thoughts, thoroughly convinced that the best precaution he could take against the perils he foresaw, was first to overcome the greatest obstacle that stood in his way.

From the very morrow of Essling, therefore, every faculty of this formidable character was devoted to the one single aim of crossing the Danube and annihilating the Archduke Charles. Convinced that if he could achieve this object, all the rest would follow as a matter of course, he brought to bear upon it that fertility of invention and indefatigable eager will with which he attacked every difficulty, once he had ascertained its vital point. His first care was to transform his check at Essling into a victory, so as to influence public opinion, for no one ever knew better to what a degree assurance imposes upon mankind, especially in time of war, when it is half the battle. A circular from Maret, therefore, bore the news of our exploits at Essling throughout Germany, France, and Italy, and by the pen of his agents they were at once transformed into signal triumphs.[1] A few days later the truth was known, but the effect had been produced. In the eyes of that large number, who on such occasions create opinion, he retained

[1] *Mémoires* de Beugnot.

that position of conqueror which his adversaries did not yet know how to take, and no matter how peremptory were their denials they only imperfectly succeeded in destroying an impression which was based on fear. Napoleon's bulletins immediately followed them, insisting, despite every assertion to the contrary, 'that the manœuvres of *General Danube* alone had saved the Austrian army.'[1]

His efforts to ruin the princes of the House of Austria in the estimation of their people were less happy, though not less persevering. There was scarcely a bulletin that did not contain some imputation against them, calculated to impress the popular mind. He especially reproached them with those evils which fall heaviest on the poorer classes, such as want and famine, although they were only the natural consequences of war. '*The rage* of the princes of the House of Lorraine *against the town of Vienna*,' he said, 'can be described by one single trait—namely, the capital is fed by means of forty mills on the left bank of the river: they have had them taken away and destroyed!'[2] Knowing of old the credulity with which a populace accepts this sort of grievance, he accused the enemy of stopping the convoys of provisions in order to starve out Vienna, and he recalled 'Our Henri Quatre,' who himself fed the capital he was besieging.[3]

But it was above all in honour of the Italian populations that Napoleon deemed it wise at this moment to employ eloquence in his bulletins. This master, ordinarily so exacting and so hard, was to-day lavish in his expressions of studied gratitude to them. The Italians who had seen their yoke changed so often since the fall of the Venetian Republic, had, during the short apparition of Archduke John in the provinces of Northern Italy, after his victory at Sacile, maintained that silent, impassive attitude which seemed least likely to compromise them. Napoleon, whose ardent desire it now was to have such conduct everywhere imitated, especially in the provinces of the Confederation of the Rhine, exalted their wise

[1] 13th bulletin of the Army of Germany. [2] Ibid.
[3] 14th bulletin.

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circumspection into a real prodigy of fidelity and patriotism. 'The people of Italy behaved as the people of Alsace, of Normandy, or of the Dauphiné might have done. They accompanied our soldiers in their retreat with good wishes and *tears!* . . . . The proclamations of Archduke John inspired only contempt and scorn. . . . . Amongst seven millions of men, the enemy found but three wretched beings who had not rejected their seductive offers. . . . . And their reward was not long in coming. . . . . That beautiful part of the continent which the Court of Rome,—which that cloud of monks,—had ruined, was now about to reappear with honour on the stage of the world.'

On the eve of the same day (May 27) he had issued a grandiloqent address of thanks to the army of Italy which Prince Eugène had just conducted to the Semmering, to effect its junction with the army of Germany. This army of Italy had partly repaired the disasters attending its outset, but its exploits weighed less in Napoleon's appreciation than the fact of the important help which its arrival afforded him. He lavished praise on the soldiers in the same manner as on the Italian people, less for what they had done than for what he intended to ask them to do later. But in reality he knew well how little he could count on the submission of his Italian subjects, and his private correspondence reveals a much lower tone of satisfaction than that which he had so well feigned in his address. 'My son!' he wrote to Prince Eugène on the very same day that he published his felicitations in the order of the day, 'I am aware that there are individuals in Padua who have behaved ill; report them to me that I may make striking examples of them. I know that the Mayor of Udine has been cowardly enough to take off his decoration. . . . . *If any great family in Padua has behaved badly, I will destroy it root and branch,—father, brother, cousin,*—so that it may serve as an example in the annals of Padua. Put into force, with greater rigour than ever, the decree *against Italians who have taken up arms against us.*'[1]

[1] Napoleon to Eugène, May 28, 1809. (Memoirs of Prince Eugène.)

But this bad humour only betrayed itself to his confidants; to every one else his aim was to appear as the happiest and most adored of sovereigns. He wished to convince Europe that he had contracted an indissoluble union with Italy, and, in order to produce this effect on the public mind, he broke forth at every opportunity into blessings, expressions of gratitude, and liberal promises. Paradisi having, in the name of the Italian Senate, presented him with some tardy protestations of fidelity, which would have been of more value had the Austrians at the time been in possession of Milan, or had they been voted before Archduke John's retreat, Napoleon replied by declarations, the phraseology of which, borrowed from ideologists, forms a curious contrast to the cynical professions of faith he so often expressed in regard to the Italian *canaille*. He congratulated the people of Italy 'on having rejected with contempt and indignation the calumnious suggestions and incentives to revolt that had been made to them by the princes of that ungrateful and false house, whose sceptre of lead had, during so many centuries, lain heavily upon our unfortunate Italy. . . . . Providence,' he added, 'has reserved for me the singular consolation of seeing it united beneath my laws, *reviving by those grand and liberal ideas which our ancestors were the first among modern nations to proclaim after the ages of barbarism.*'[1] Our ancestors when in Paris were Charlemagne and his successors, but at Milan they were the Italians of the *Renaissance*; they were changed according to the locality. As to the liberal ideas, their appreciation depended altogether upon the particular period. The danger once past, the Italians quickly learned what to think of such flattering assurances.

The artifices used to bring back wavereers, to restore his *prestige*, and to obtain the moral effect he desired to produce on Europe, were only subsidiary to the immense works which Napoleon achieved for the strengthening of his military situation. To concentrate all his troops upon one given point, so as to become invincible in that particular spot, and to

[1] To Paradisi, June 16, 1809.

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diminish, and by degrees remove, the obstacle presented to him by the Danube, was the double problem he set himself to solve, and to which he applied all the powers of his genius. In the first place he persisted in crossing the Danube at the very same spot where his first attempt had failed, and he has himself explained the motive of this resolve somewhat later in a letter addressed to Eugène, who proposed his passing it opposite Raab. He wrote to him as follows: 'From Raab to Vienna is six days' march. If I had a bridge in the position where you now are, I could not cross the Danube there, for whilst I was crossing near Raab, Prince Charles would cross the river behind me at Vienna. In two days he would have made a bridge. Now Raab is not worth Vienna; my centre and my line of communication would be upset, and I should find myself in a bad position.'[1] And if he were to retrograde to Linz in order to take advantage of the bridge there, the inconvenience, though less, would still be very great, as he would equally run the risk of losing Vienna. The Isle of Lobau still seemed to him the most favourable point for this operation. He had made it bristle with artillery,—transformed it into an impregnable fort. His best troops were assembled there under command of Masséna; and they were thoroughly familiar with the ground and the adjacent positions. His first care was to secure their communications with the right bank; a task relatively easy to accomplish, for on the one hand, the rise of the Danube, which had proved so fatal to our bridges of boats during the two days of Essling, daily showed signs of diminishing, while on the other, the right bank was protected from being turned by the enemy, by Davout who was quartered in the neighbourhood of Presburg, by Montbrun's cavalry which cleared the road to Hungary, by Bernadotte's corps, which on being recalled to Vienna, guarded the Danube from that town to Krems where Vandamme was posted, and finally by Lauriston who joined hands with Prince Eugène near the Semmering.

He was anxious that, this time, his bridges should be secure from every accident, even from the fireships and the mills.

[1] To Eugène, June 19.

which the Austrians purposely launched into the river against them. By his orders General Bertram constructed two bridges on piles 800 yards long.' One was sufficient for the passage of three carriages abreast, the other, being especially destined for the infantry, was only eight feet wide. Both were protected from the fireships by stockades also formed of piles, and guarded night and day by boats manned by the Marines of the Guard. A bridge of boats was likewise made to render the communications more rapid.

These works, which were finished in twenty days, excited universal admiration. It were puerile, however, to compare them to the bridge thrown across the Rhine in eight days by Cæsar, although Napoleon had the bad taste himself to suggest this theme to his future historians in his twenty-fourth bulletin of the Army of Germany, one which with their customary complaisance they have not failed to amplify.[1] With the incalculable resources afforded in our days by a capital like Vienna, it will always be easy to repeat this pretended miracle of constructing two bridges on piles within twenty days; for an active engineer and some thousand workmen are all that is necessary for it. One is not more justified in comparing them to the bridge thrown by Cæsar across the Rhine amidst the forests of Germany, then in a savage state, than of likening the passage of Mount Saint Bernard to the passage of the Alps by Hannibal. Besides, the most important and best conceived portion of the operation which Napoleon was preparing, was by no means the construction of the two bridges across the principal arm of the Danube, and which joined the Isle of Lobau to the right bank; far more worthy of such praise was the astounding feat by which he was enabled within two hours, and in presence of the Austrian army, simultaneously to throw six bridges across the small arm separating the island from the left bank. On that day, as during the

[1] 'Cæsar's bridge,' said he, while claiming for himself all the advantage of the comparison, 'was thrown across, no doubt, in eight days; *but no carriage could pass over it.*' (24th bulletin). It is unnecessary to point out the pettiness of such a comparison.

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previous days of Essling, the Archduke's calculations were based upon the presumed impossibility of marching an army of two hundred thousand men in one night across the narrow pathways of two or even of three bridges; it never occurred to him that it would be possible to create a kind of movable floor which should all but suppress the Danube, and allow our army to manœuvre as if on terra firma.

Whilst these great works were in course of execution, some beneath the very eyes of the inhabitants, others skilfully concealed from the knowledge of the enemy, Napoleon displayed an activity and talent no less worthy of admiration in the distribution of his military forces. We have already seen that Prince Eugène, so early as the 27th of May, had brought to him the principal corps of the army of Italy, numbering from 30,000 to 40,000 men, having first retaliated on the Archduke John in several successful combats, especially at Tagliamento, at Malthorghetto, and at Tarvis. A strong detachment of this army had remained behind, under the orders of Macdonald, to follow and fight the Ban of Croatia, Giulay, whom John had left in Styria. Macdonald was at Grätz, with about twenty thousand men.[1] Still further back stood Marmont, with eleven thousand, whom he was bringing up from the depths of Dalmatia, after a long and difficult march, during which he had had at every step to fight the insurgents of Croatia under Stoisewitch. Marmont was still at Laybach, in Carniola. These two corps, besides operating their junction with the army of Italy, were ordered to destroy the remnants of Giulay's troops and to prevent the detachment of Chastelar from rejoining Archduke John, just as Eugène had stopped that of Jellachich. Napoleon attached the greatest importance to the capture of the Marquis de Chastelar, a Belgian *émigré*, to whom he wrongly attributed our want of success in the Tyrol. He ordered that, as soon as taken he should be shot, to make what he called an example. From the moment of its arrival at the Semmering, Eugène

[1] This number is deduced from Napoleon's own statement, estimating the total of the reinforcements brought to him by Eugène at sixty thousand men. (To Bernadotte, May 27, 1809.)

employed his army in accomplishing the task traced out for it by Napoleon. Archduke John had not left Koermond. It was essential, on the one hand, to deprive him of every chance of attacking Macdonald, and on the other, to force him to cross the Danube at the most distant point possible. This could be done by outflanking him on the left, and threatening thus to place him between two fires, between the corps of Davout and of Eugène. The Viceroy, consequently, had to march from Oedenburg on Koermond by Güns and Stainamanger, and then to descend the Raab, following his adversary step by step. By this manœuvre the nearest point at which Archduke John could cross the Danube would be Komorn, and in such a case the circuit he would have to make in order to join his brother would be much longer than that which Eugène would require to join Napoleon.

This concentric movement, impressed upon his army at this time by Napoleon, gradually brought back under his own hand every disposable force he possessed, not only in Germany, but also in France and Italy. He had even made the regiments quartered at Rome leave that city,[1] and the last recruits, levied in anticipation of 1810, though as yet mere raw soldiers who had been incorporated into and drilled by our depôts on the Rhine, were now marched to the Danube. Such troops as were either occupying the Tyrol or forming corps of observation in its neighbourhood, under orders of Lefebvre and of Wrede, were sent to Linz, there to replace the Saxons under Bernadotte, called off to Vienna, but who thus left several Bavarian garrisons so completely uncovered that they were speedily surrounded by insurrectionary forces. Vandamme assisted Lefebvre by occupying Krems with the Würtembergers, while Junot organized the conscripts of the Confederation on the Main.

In his anxiety to utilise and group around him every force capable of serving his purpose, Napoleon was led on to a singular proceeding, that has been hitherto unrecorded, but which deserves notice as alike illustrating his unscrupulousness and the power with which a dominant idea took possession of his mind. At that moment of feverish activity, when his piercing

[1] To Murat, May 28, 1809.

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vision was everywhere seeking for arms and men with the view of massing them together on the spot he had chosen for a fresh struggle, his eye, which overlooked nothing, fell upon a Russian squadron then anchored in the port of Trieste. At once the idea struck him of enrolling the crews, of forming them into battalions and of bringing them to the Danube. Consequently, he ordered the commanding officer of the squadron, the subject of an allied sovereign, it is true, but not under his orders, to dismantle his vessels instantly, to transport his 'artillery, his ammunition, cordage, anchors, sails, &c.,' to Venice, and finally to send his crews to Palmanova, where they would be formed into an organized corps and thence despatched to Vienna. The same order was to be given to the Russian flotilla off Venice. In prescribing this extraordinary manœuvre to this officer, Napoleon did not precisely tell him that he had the formal consent of the Emperor Alexander, but he wrote to him in so many words '*that this order was conformable to the intentions of the Czar*,' adding, that his object was 'to prevent the Russian vessels falling into the hands of the Austrians or of the English.' The Admiral refused to obey. This singular order can be properly understood only by imagining the reception Napoleon would have given any one of his own Admirals who had obeyed a similar injunction in a Russian port (June 16).

Quitting Oedenburg on the 5th of June, Prince Eugène continued his march against Archduke John. On the 7th he reached Güns, and on the 9th was joined by Macdonald at Koermond. This latter general had left a part of his corps d'armée before the citadel of Grätz, with orders to join Marmont on the fall of that place. The Archduke had reascended the Raab as far as St. Gothard; from thence he had turned off to Papa, where Montbrun, who was following him closely, attacked his rearguard in a brilliant cavalry engagement. On the 13th of June the two armies found themselves in presence of each other, beneath the walls of the town of Raab.

Archduke John had resolved to give us battle. Nothing could be more inopportune, or more contrary to the interests

of the monarchy than such a determination; for, even supposing it to be crowned with success, it could only end in a fruitless victory. According to General Marziani's testimony, the Archduke's principal officers were for the most part opposed to an effusion of blood which they considered at least useless, as in any case it would be necessary to recross the Danube. There was so large a force too behind the line defended by Prince Eugène, that even were he to suffer any check at this point, he could quickly have repaired it.

Moreover, even under the most favourable conditions, they could not expect to beat us. Eugène had been reinforced by several regiments composed of our best troops. He possessed so great a numerical majority, that he was enabled, without the slightest inconvenience, to leave Macdonald's corps behind him at Papa;[1] and, in case of a reverse, he could easily fall back either on this detachment, or on Davout's corps. The Archduke, on the contrary, had received no reinforcements, except some badly disciplined troops from the insurrection in Hungary, brought to him by his brother Raynier, and his army numbered less than thirty thousand men. From the moment that he missed the opportunity of crossing the Danube at Presburg, in accordance with his instructions from Archduke Charles, there was but one rational course open to him, that of crossing it as quickly as possible at Komorn, and leaving the task of harassing and surprising our cantonments in the hands of the insurgent corps. But Archduke John was possessed by the desire of acting on his own account and making for himself a military reputation which should rival that of his brother. He therefore awaited his adversary in positions not, on the whole, unskilfully selected—his right resting on the strong town of Raab, his centre protected by the solid entrenchments of the farm of Kismegyer, his left covered by marshes; in short his whole

[1] This detachment, for which he was later reproached as for a military fault, was recommended to him by Napoleon himself (in a letter dated June 10), in order to secure 'the rear of the Army of Italy.' See the Memoirs of Prince Eugène.

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line of battle formed upon the plan of keeping his communications with Komorn free whatever might happen.

The combat commenced about midday on the 14th of June, 1809, the anniversary of Marengo. Montbrun had the honour of leading the attack. After driving in the enemy's outposts he tried to outflank the Archduke's left, which was chiefly composed of cavalry, when the action became general. The Severoli and Durutte divisions marched upon the village of Szabadhegy occupied by the Austrian left, while the Grenier and Séras divisions rushed forward to take the Kismegyer farm where the enemy's centre was entrenched. These two attacks, received with unwonted vigour, were stoutly repulsed. The Severoli division had to retire to its positions with considerable loss, when the Austrians emerged from the village in pursuit, but were forced on their side to withdraw anew within shelter of their entrenchments, by Durutte who advanced to support his colleague. Séras was not more fortunate at Kismegyer, where a fierce struggle took place. Nor did our soldiers, despite their desperate assaults, make the slightest impression on the fortified farm, the area of which was covered with our dead. But a general charge of all our cavalry, directed by Montbrun and Grouchy, having made the troops on the outskirts of the farm give way, its defenders, finding themselves unsupported, began to falter, though as yet continuing their fire with spirit, and without thought of surrender. At length, after a long and sanguinary resistance they succumbed beneath the united efforts of Generals Séras and Roussel. The doors were burst open with hatchets, and our soldiers, highly incensed, rushed in through the breach, massacring all before them; then, in order to finish the matter more quickly, they set fire to the farm buildings, when the last survivors of this butchery were burnt alive. These horrors over, all the regiments thus released from operations in the centre were despatched to the support of the Durutte and Severoli divisions, which, owing to this reinforcement, succeeded in carrying the village of Szabadhegy. Victory, long disputed, declared itself in our favour, and the army of Archduke John rushed in full retreat towards Komorn,

after having lost about three thousand men killed and wounded, and fifteen hundred taken prisoners. Our loss amounted to upwards of two thousand five hundred disabled.[1]

The battle of Raab, independently of its immediate results, which consisted in opening up the approach to Hungary and making the defences of the town fall into our hands after a few days' siege, was of the utmost importance in its moral effect. It caused dismay and intimidation in the ranks of the enemy, paralysed their measures, disconcerted their projects and prevented their reaping the benefit of some partial advantages gained by them at this period. The Tyrolese insurrection had become more threatening than ever in response to the voice of Andrew Hofer, but now we were content to circumscribe it, until able to stifle it later. The entrances to the Tyrol were closed by well-selected posts, occupied by the troops of Generals Deroi, Lefebvre, and Rusca, after which the revolt was allowed to exhaust itself on the spot. Insurrectionary attempts in Franconia were promptly suppressed by the King of Würtemberg; and lastly, the incursions of the Duke of Brunswick-Oels into Saxony brought him but few partisans, although the sympathy of the population was almost unanimous in his favour. Time, irreparable time, was gliding away, whilst Napoleon's adversaries had already in great part lost the benefit of the two days of Essling, from not having seized the opportunity with the necessary energy and decision. Enthusiasm is catching, but no one is carried away by it unless the leaders themselves give the impulse; here, on the contrary, their indecision communicated itself to every one. Even those who at first had been the most ardent now wished to wait for some more decided success before openly declaring themselves.

In Styria and in Carinthia, where a portion of Macdonald's corps had been left, occupied in besieging the citadel of Grätz under Broussier's orders, and where Marmont's small army was instructed to intercept Chastelar's detachment, Napoleon's views

[1] Prince Eugène's *correspondance*; 19th bulletin of the Army of Germany; *Histoire de la campagne de* 1809, by General Pelet; Jomini; *Mémoires* of Marshal Grouchy, published by the Marquis de Grouchy.

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were but imperfectly realised; nevertheless, he attained his principal object, that of collecting all his troops on the Danube. Marmont, anxious to recruit his men after the fatigue of a long march, committed the fault of halting at Laybach for nearly a fortnight, from the 3rd to the 16th of June, thus allowing Chastelar to escape by Klagenfurth. Broussier, in his impatience to effect a junction with Marmont, was on his side imprudent enough to leave a single regiment before Grätz, which was at once assailed by a force five times stronger; but both promptly repaired their errors, the former by several times beating detachments of the Ban of Croatia, Giulay; the latter, by the timely rescue of the brave troops he had thus endangered. A few days later they arrived under the walls of Vienna together, to join hands with the Grand Army of Germany.

The arrival of these last detachments completed the effective strength of the army which Napoleon intended to throw across the Danube for the purpose of crushing Archduke Charles. All his arrangements were now finished, and the moment had arrived to strike the last blow. Five weeks had passed since Essling. But he had not lost one minute of that time, while his adversaries had spent it in false moves, ill-judged or useless proeeedings. Supported on one side by the line of the Raab, on the other by the corps placed in echelon along the Danube as far as Linz, he was but little troubled by the affrays, less serious than noisy, that had taken place at more distant points. He had only one fear; that the Archduke Charles, divining his projects, might be tempted at the last moment to cross the Danube at Komorn or Presburg, whilst he was passing it at Lobau. With the view to guard against this danger, he had ordered Davout to destroy the bridge of boats held by the Archduke at Presburg, but as the Austrians attached equal importance to its preservation, the Marshal's efforts had been unsuccessful. The bridge at Presburg was protected not only by advanced works, but by solid entrenchments constructed in the islands formed by the Danube opposite the town. The battalions stationed in those islands baffled all our attempts at destroying the bridge, and nothing could dislodge them, not

even showers of grape and balls. Napoleon then had recourse to an extraordinary expedient in order to force the Austrian troops to evacuate the islands. It was not by cannonading the positions occupied by these troops, but simply by bombarding the inoffensive town of Presburg itself, hoping to extract from the enemy by the sight of the misery inflicted on the unfortunate inhabitants, what the courage of our troops could not wrest from him. In general, no town is bombarded unless for the purpose of forcing the enemy to evacuate it; but, on this occasion, this cruel measure was adopted, according to Napoleon's own words, with the view of forcing the enemy *into Presburg*,[1] after having abandoned the islands. And Napoleon in no way shrank from the consequences of so odious a proceeding. In the same letter he writes, 'as they have made preparations at Presburg for crossing the river, and as that town is a centre of magazines, it *must be set on fire and burnt*[2].

In the summons to surrender sent to Presburg, Davout alleged as a cause some pretended 'movements on the quays, and works on the heights,' but the only real object he had in view was the evacuation of the islands still obstinately refused to him. Davout was dreaded for the harshness of his character, even in an army whose chiefs, for the most part, were no longer renowned for their generosity or noble sentiments. In this instance, however, he acted unwillingly. Still he performed the painful task with vigorous exactitude, and reported it in the twenty-third bulletin in the following false words: 'The enemy was *working at fortifications*. An order was sent to him to stop the works, but he disregarded it. Four thousand bombs and shells forced him to abandon the project. But this *unfortunate town* took fire and several quarters in it have been burnt.' The truth is that the enemy had neither ceased working, nor evacuated the islands. Marshal Davout, seeing,—according to a rather expressive euphemism,—that his severity produced no results, *yielded to a feeling of humanity*: in other words, abstained from totally destroying a city, the destruction of which would have been useless to him. He however

[1] Napoleon to Davout, June 23, 1809. 1st letter. [2] Ibid.

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succeeded in carrying the tête de pont, and in raising round the village of Engereau, right opposite the islands, a series of entrenchments under cover of which a few thousand men could, for a certain time, prevent the enemy leaving the town. According to Napoleon's calculations, four thousand men and a cavalry regiment left at Presburg under Baraguay D'Hilliers, twelve hundred men at Raab, as many more at Klagenfurth, with three thousand at Bruck, were sufficient to form a curtain that would keep the Austrians in check or might at least deceive them, while Prince Eugène's and Davout's corps were advancing by forced marches to the Isle of Lobau. Thus, in three days at the most, all our united forces might find it possible to assemble on the same field of battle, before the Archduke would be able to concentrate his forces there[1].

The preparations for the rapid and instantaneous passage of the small arm of the Danube, which had been skilfully concealed from the enemy owing to the multiplicity of inner channels amongst the islands, were completed at the very moment that the concentration of the army was effected. The construction of the two bridges upon piles and of the stockades had rendered it unnecessary to think any longer about the principal arm of the river; in fact, it might be almost regarded as suppressed, so easy had its use become to our troops. Napoleon's mind had also been devoted to making the passage of the small arm still more simple and easy. No means failing him for this object, neither in arms, instruments, or in *matériel*, it was evident that a genius like his, taught, moreover, by the sanguinary lesson of Essling, would not a second time commit the same mistake. All his faculties, in short, were applied to the solution of the problem, how, in place of renewing the successive and spasmodic attacks of Essling, he could face the enemy with all his united forces. This solution, very simple in theory if not in practice, consisted in so multiplying the modes of passage, as to be able in one night to throw his whole army on that part of the bank which the Archduke had had the imprudence to leave uncovered.

[1] Napoleon to Eugène and to Davout, June 29, 1809.

The Isle of Lobau forms a kind of irregular triangle with rounded corners, the base of which extends along the right bank of the Danube, opposite our old positions, whilst its two upper sides face the left bank, then occupied by the Austrians. One of these two sides was menaced in front by the fortified works that connected the three villages of Aspern, Essling, and Enzersdorf; the other, nearly a league in length, looked across the river over an open plain, where a few detachments of scouts might now and then be seen, while in the distance was the small castle of Sachsengang, held by the Austrian troops more as a post of observation than of resistance. It was at this large opening thus left free, that Napoleon resolved to make his army cross. In the channels formed by the small islands that lie laterally to the Isle of Lobau, he had amassed the materials requisite for making fully six bridges; bridges of rafts, of boats, of pontoons, even a bridge constructed in one single piece, fastened to the shore by one end only, the moveable portion of which was to be carried across from one bank to the other in a few minutes by the mere force of the current. Decisive measures had been taken to protect the operation from any attack on the part of the enemy. All the approaches to the Isle of Lobau were covered by artillery, but as the village of Enzersdorf was the most advanced Austrian position on the side where the passage across the river was contemplated, and the one, consequently, whence it would be most easy to fall upon our flanks during the execution of this manœuvre, fifty-eight pieces of artillery were concentrated at a given point commanding this unfortunate village, which they were to burn and raze to the ground in a few moments.[1] Other batteries erected somewhat more to the right, on the eastern point of the island, were intended to annihilate every corps belonging to the enemy, that might dare to venture into the neighbouring plain. Their fire was to be seconded by several gunboats manned by marines of the Guard. And, in order that the construction of the bridges should not be impeded even by an Austrian patrol, ferry-boats capable of conveying fifteen hundred men, were to land on the

[1] Distribution of artillery in the Isle of Lobau, June 20, 1809.

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opposite bank a whole division, instructed to drive off the enemy's outposts.

When all these arrangements were terminated, orders, dictated beforehand by Napoleon with the most rigorous precision, regulated every detail of their execution. He pointed out to his generals the direction each should follow, the position each corps d'armeé should occupy, named the hour at which the ferry-boats should quit the shore, the spot where the cables should be fixed that were used for their movement backwards and forwards, the precise moment when the cannonade should commence, the measures necessary to be taken for guarding the bridges and the island [1]. The powerful means of action thus collected by his activity, were set in motion with such admirable foresight, and were blended with such harmony and at the same time such minute precision, that their success was infallible on the data upon which Napoleon speculated. From the moment that Archduke Charles vainly hoped to retard—not to prevent—our passage, and thus to entice our divided army to a battle-field chosen by him, from the moment that he restricted his efforts to contracting the space where we might cross the river—nay, more, contracting it insufficiently, instead of completely closing access to it as he might have done,—from that moment the obstacle presented by the Danube no longer existed for our army. Thanks to Napoleon's precautions, it was about to manœuvre exactly as if on terra firma, and in full force to confront the enemy who would thereby lose all the advantages of their position.

The night of the 4th of July was chosen for the great undertaking. Secresy was more than ever essential to the success of the operation. From the 3rd of July we detained the messengers sent by the enemy with a flag of truce to our camp. At the same time we employed various devices to persuade the enemy that we were preparing to cross the Danube at the same spot as on the day of Essling. On the 2nd of July our troops took possession amid great noise of the Mill-island, situated opposite Aspern. On the 3rd of July General Legrand, under

[1] Order for the passage of the Danube, July 2, 1809; and Order, July 4, 1809.

fire of the Austrian redoubts, occupied the little wood where our first landing had been effected. The evening of the same day, at nightfall, Bernadotte's corps, Bessières' cavalry and the Guard successively arrived and took up the positions assigned for them in the Isle of Lobau, which was already occupied by Masséna's and Oudinot's corps. On the evening of the 4th the corps of Marmont, of Prince Eugène, and finally that of Davout, who had cleverly slipped away after having masked his lines before Presburg, advanced in their turn into the island. Towards ten o'clock that evening almost the entire army was there assembled. The two banks were still silent; but if on the enemy's side every one was asleep, on ours every one was on foot and ready. The night was thick, the sky impenetrably dark, rain, accompanied by violent gusts of wind, began to fall, and soon poured down in torrents.

At that moment, boats filled with light-infantry of the Conroux brigade, and escorted by the gunboats of Captain Baste, were noiselessly unfastened from the southern bank of the Isle of Lobau. They glided in the darkness to the small arm of the Danube, then touched the left bank below Mulheiten, where our soldiers at once attacked the Austrian outposts. This volley of musketry gave the signal. The front of the Isle of Lobau was instantly lit up by the fire of a hundred and twenty guns, whilst a sham attack, led by Legrand, held back at Aspern and Essling the Klenau grenadiers who guarded those fortified positions. The houses at Enzersdorf were first shattered to pieces by the guns of our batteries, and then set on fire by our shells, and the flying bridge, issuing from the canal of Alexander island, in a few minutes afforded a solid footing for our infantry, a hundred and sixty yards in length. Three other bridges were successively thrown across, opposite the different stations where our army-corps had taken up their positions; at two o'clock in the morning we possessed four, a little later we had six, which rendered our issue from the Isle of Lobau as easy as it could have been on any ground whatever, for no road, however wide we may suppose it, could offer accommodation equal to this. During the whole night our troops

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defiled without encountering any obstacle on the left bank, except a few detachments which they captured, or which rapidly fled at their approach. Immediately on landing, our corps d'armée ranged themselves and deployed according to the order they were to occupy in the forthcoming battle; on the left that of Masséna, in the centre that of Oudinot, on the right Davout's corps, backed in the second line by those of Bernadotte, of Eugène, and of Marmont, and by the Bavarians under Wrede, the whole supported by a reserve of the Guard and heavy cavalry. The total strength of our forces cannot be estimated at less than from one hundred and eighty to two hundred thousand men.[1] Those of Archduke Charles would scarcely have numbered so many even had all his troops been collected. But of this number twenty thousand men were still at Presburg under Archduke John, who had not responded to his brother's call in time; about twelve thousand others formed a corps of observation off Vienna under command of Prince Reuss; six or seven thousand were before Nussdorf, and as many more before Krems. His army, therefore, was inferior to ours by about forty thousand men, but this was owing to his own fault. Nor is it easy to understand why Napoleon's panegyrists invariably try to deprive him of the merit of numerical superiority, while he displayed such fertility of resource in securing it under

[1] This estimate, systematically reduced according to custom, can be attained only by the known strength of each corps at the outset of the campaign, allowance being made for probable losses. Our calculation supposes that they had lost, since then, nearly half their effective strength which is far from being the truth. Napoleon had at that period almost his entire army with him, except a few detachments placed under the orders of Lefebvre, Vandamme, and Baraguay d'Hilliers. Some of his corps d'armée counted three, others four divisions of infantry alone. That of Prince Eugène, not the most numerous, alone counted thirty-two thousand men *present at the battle*, without including the detachment left on the Raab. Marmont asserts that he saw, with his own eyes, returns giving the total number of combatants at Wagram at one hundred and sixty-seven thousand men, which comes near our calculation. Finally, according to an official report, dated the 1st June, the total of all the French and allied troops which we had in Germany amounted to two hundred and eighty-six thousand men, *present under arms*.

every contingency, and that according to his own maxims he made all the art of war consist in knowing how to be found superior to the enemy in strength on a particular point, at any given time.

Sunrise saw almost our whole army deployed in battle array on that part of the plain of the Marchfeld which extends from Enzersdorf to Vittau. Enzersdorf was nothing but a smoking mass of ruins, behind which a few battalions still held their ground. Masséna, who formed our left, drove them from it, and then; the entire army wheeling round Enzersdorf, advanced right forward, taking, by the mere fact of their onward march, not only the Castle of Sachsengang, but also the fortified works of Essling and Aspern, which were turned and occupied without resistance. Forced to evacuate them, Klenau fell back on Stadlau and Kagran, where he formed the Austrian right, joining Kollowrath whose corps d'armée was quartered near Gerasdorf. The Archduke's line, completed by this manœuvre, presented a vast semicircle, the extreme right leaning on Stadlau, Gerasdorf's centre at Wagram, and his left extending from Wagram to Neusiedel. Although the rapidity of our manœuvre had taken them by surprise, his army was still well-prepared for the combat; it occupied strong positions, his right ranged upon the heights as on an amphitheatre, while his left was covered by a deep though narrow stream, the Russbach. He could no longer hope to attack us during the operation nor before we were fully formed, as he had intended, but he was quite capable of sustaining a defensive battle.

Towards six o'clock that evening, having encountered but partial resistance, our move was crowned with complete success, for the French army took up its position in a line concentric with that of the enemy, its left being at Aspern, its centre at Raasdorf, and its right at Glinzensdorf. Napoleon, believing the Archduke to be ill-prepared, and above all to be weak owing to the immense extension of his line, thought that a strong, sudden, sharp attack on his centre might gain us some decided advantages, even though the day was then far advanced. If this bold stroke were fully successful, we should find ourselves

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in the centre of the enemy's positions from the outset, and the Austrian army, cut in two, would have hardly any alternative but to retreat. In pursuance of this plan Oudinot advanced rapidly on Baumersdorf, while Prince Eugène and Bernadotte endeavoured to carry the platform of Wagram, the key of the Austrian positions. But the Russbach, which here covered the Archduke's front, opposed a much more serious obstacle than had been anticipated, and the enemy, far from being inclined to give way, received the attack with extreme vigour. Oudinot, on his side, in vain attempted to enter Baumersdorf, though his troops were led back to it several times. At length Bernadotte succeeded in crossing the stream, and, rushing on with the Saxons to Wagram, held it for some minutes; it was but for a few minutes however, for speedily overpowered by superior numbers, and weakened by the withdrawal of the Dupas division detached to support Oudinot,[1] he too had to yield, and at once to retire upon Aderklaa. Prince Eugène, also, who tried to ascend the plateau to the right of Wagram, met with a similar fate despite the courage displayed by Macdonald and by Grenier. Noteworthy is it, moreover, that these three corps in no way supported each other. Thus failed this rash and ill-concerted attack (July 5, 1809).

Napoleon in his twenty-fifth bulletin attributes his failure to the mistake made by some Saxon and French soldiers in firing on each other. But this episode, if it really took place, which is doubtful, as it is not generally mentioned by eye-witnesses of the battle,[2] certainly was not of the importance he attaches to it, and in no degree influenced the issue of a skirmish that was unworthy of the genius of this great captain. The truth is that the attack failed because it had been ill-conceived and badly executed, and the real or supposed conflict of our troops figured in the bulletin simply in order to palliate a fault which neither Napoleon's pride nor his policy would avow.

[1] Letter of General Gersdorf to Gourgaud.

[2] Not even by Gersdorf, who wrote with the view of justifying the Saxons. I may add that good military judges, like Jomini, pass it over in silence. So does Marmont, Savary, &c., all present at the battle. General Pelet mentions it doubtingly and without attaching any importance to it.

The night was passed on both sides in preparations for the battle of the morrow. Every one felt that it must be a decisive one. Never in modern times had so large a number of men been collected on the same spot, for here were nearly three hundred and fifty thousand soldiers preparing to kill each other on the vast plain of the Marchfeld. From early dawn thousands of spectators covered the roofs of the buildings in Vienna, little more than a league distant from the scene of action, anxiously awaiting the issue of the combat which was to decide their fate.

Meantime Napoleon had consolidated his army more than on the previous day. He left Bernadotte in his advanced position at Aderklaa, but took care to reinforce Masséna's corps, at the same time placing it on his left in the second line, while he confided the charge of Aspern to the Boudet division. His other corps took up their positions from Aderklaa to Grosshofen, opposite the Wagram plateau, and even Davout, though on our extreme right, received instructions to draw nearer to this point. The Emperor, rendered more circumspect, it would seem, by the check of the day before, had resolved to await a move on the enemy's side before definitely deciding on his plan of action, whilst the Archduke, influenced by an opposite feeling, determined this time to act on the offensive. Thus, it may be said, that both had changed places, the one being as little inclined by nature to wait for his adversary's initative, as the other was to precede him. The Archduke had ordered a general attack along his whole line, but he wished it to be begun by the right wing, which was by far the strongest. Commanded by Klenau and Kollowrath, it was to advance from Süssenbrun and Kagran in the direction of Aspern, and, by threatening our bridges over the Danube, create alarm in our rear. The other Austrian corps then taking advantage of the confusion that would ensue, might, in their turn, attack us with greater effect.

The order of battle adopted by the Archduke, though very advantageous in regard to the effect of his fire, had the defect of making the communications difficult. The great distance

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between the Austrian head quarters and the furthest corps d'armée was in itself the cause of his instructions always arriving too late. By an inversion damaging to the Austrians, the Archduke's left wing was the first to attack, instead of the right, as he had intended. Rosenberg, who commanded it, descended from the heights of Neusiedel, crossed the Russbach, and at about four o'clock in the morning came into collision with Davout's corps which was terminating its part of the concentric move between Grosshofen and Glinzendorf. The Emperor, astonished at this eccentric and vigorous attack, rushed in person to the support of Davout's four divisions with eight regiments of heavy cavalry and one battery of eight guns which opened on the flank of Rosenberg's corps, and the Austrians finding their manœuvre of no avail except as a diversion, being thus cut short, re-crossed the Russbach, lost the ground they had gained and took up their old position at Neusiedel.

Meanwhile our left was engaged on its side, but with less success. Bernadotte, who in some sort formed its advanced point at Aderklaa in the middle of the semicircle formed by the Austrian positions, seeing himself isolated, badly supported, and surrounded by enemies, fell back towards Masséna, after having evacuated the village, which was instantly occupied by Bellegarde. Uniting their forces, the two Marshals returned together to Aderklaa, whence, by means of a combined attack, they succeeded in driving out the enemy. Archduke Charles, however, rushed forward with his reserve to Bellegarde's aid, and, impetuously penetrating into Aderklaa, forced Bernadotte slowly to retire before him, while Masséna, on the other hand, was called back to Süssenbrun by Kollowrath and Klenau, who, also beginning to move forward, advanced upon his flanks. Still suffering from the effects of a fall from his horse, Masséna traversed the field of battle in a carriage, and with his customary intrepidity, rendered all the more striking by his weakness, he showed himself at every point which was most threatened. Never did he seem grander in the face of danger, and never was his glorious name greeted with more enthusiastic acclamations. But his corps d'armée could not withstand the

almost twofold strength of Klenau and Kollowrath. Falling back upon Aspern it joined the Boudet division, but was soon driven still further and forced to retreat beyond Essling, which was then speedily occupied by the enemy.

Thus, towards nine o'clock in the morning, we had victoriously repulsed Rosenberg's attack on our right, but our left was well-nigh completely routed. It had lost nearly two leagues of ground, and the Austrians creeping on between us and the Danube were on the point of taking us in reverse and seizing our bridges. The formidable mass in our centre, however, was still intact and had not even been engaged, although it might have been previously turned to good account. In that point were gathered the several corps of Prince Eugène, Marmont, Oudinot, and the Bavarians, with the guard and the immense reserves of artillery and cavalry. The surprising inactivity of such imposing forces, whilst our centre was being crushed, can only be explained by the Emperor's fatigue, by the obstacles arising from the long distances, and by the difficulty of setting such enormous masses in motion; for Napoleon had been perceptibly below his usual standard in the late engagements, especially in the skirmish of the previous evening, either from the fact that his genius, which was so eminently made for taking the offensive, had been more or less stunned by an attack of such unexpected proportions, or that he had for the moment exhausted the resources of his intellect in the marvellous operation of crossing the Danube.

However that may have been, the fault committed was not irreparable, and he instantly took every means to ensure us overpowering revenge. Masséna, to whom he dispatched reinforcements, was desired to occupy himself solely in holding the Archduke's right at bay, while the chief bulk of our army was throwing itself on the unsupported Austrian centre, with all that vigour and impulse which on their part had hitherto been restrained. Davout, meanwhile, was to take advantage of this great offensive movement to turn the Russbach, and thus overcome that obstacle before attacking it in front with Oudinot. In order to prepare the way for the advance by our centre, an

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enormous battery of a hundred guns was brought forward from the reserve, under command of Lauriston and of Drouot, and at once opening a terrific fire, forced back the enemy's line and created fearful havoc in the Austrian ranks. The column of attack commanded by Macdonald then advanced, watched by the rest of the French army, confident of the result. It was followed by the Broussier, Lamarque, and Séras divisions, by a portion of the Guards under Reille's orders, and by the cuirassiers of Nansouty. The Austrians yielded beneath the shock of this irresistible mass of troops which, overturning everything in their path, pushed forward to Süssenbrun without hastening or slackening their pace, alike calm and intrepid. There, however, they at length stopped, owing to the desperate efforts made by the Archduke, by Lichtentstein and Kollowrath. The Austrian commander felt that he must at all hazards arrest our march, if he wished to extricate his right from the false position in which it had placed itself by advancing too far between our army and the Danube. Despatching it an order to retreat before Masséna, who followed it step by step, he concentrated all his available forces against Macdonald's column which, now somewhat isolated, was in its turn exposed to a tremendous fire and suffered immense loss. But the arrival of Wrede's Bavarians and of Durutte's divisions quickly filled up the death-gaps in its ranks. Despite this assistance, however, the success of our centre, which at first was so decided, would have continued doubtful and even have been compromised if Davout's attack upon Neusiedel and then on Wagram had not definitively ensured our victory.

While Macdonald was performing this march, which has been so justly admired, against the enemy's centre, Davout, with two of his own divisions and Montbrun's cavalry, had crossed the Russbach unseen by the Austrians, and precisely at those points which ought to have been guarded by the Archduke John, had he known how to obey his brother's orders in time. The Russbach being turned by one portion of our troops, the others crossed it in front, and Rosenberg, who occupied Neusiedel, thus found himself attacked in front and flank by Davout's divisions.

After a desperate struggle, during which Neusiedel was taken and retaken many times, the village was finally captured, and Davout, driving Rosenberg back on the Blockflies road with two of his divisions, marched with the other two to the plateau at Wagram, where Hohenzollern still stood unassailed. Oudinot, who only waited for this signal, seeing Davout suddenly appear on the heights, now in his turn rushed forward. His first brigades, met by a sharp volley, suffered severely, but he led them back to the assault, penetrated into Baumersdorf, there joining Gudin's division which belonged to the Davout corps, and they advanced together against Wagram. Hohenzollern, overpowered by the onslaught, saw that it was utterly impossible to maintain his ground, and, like Rosenberg, at once effected his retreat. The whole Austrian army soon followed his example. The centre held out only long enough to allow the right to disengage itself, but as soon as the latter reached Leopoldau in safety, it too fell back in the direction of Wolkersdorf. In fact, from the moment that Archduke John failed to arrive in time to restore its position to the left, the Austrians could no longer sustain the combat with any advantage.

It was not more than two o'clock in the afternoon. The Austrians retreated in excellent order, leaving only a few prisoners in our lines, nearly all wounded.[1] It is remarkable, moreover, that our cavalry were several times desired to charge, according to its natural duty at the end of a battle, but, what had never before happened in Napoleon s army, the order was not carried out. Various reasons have been assigned for this singular fact, such as Bessières, who had the chief command of this arm, having been wounded, Lasalle his best general killed, and, finally, the immense confusion of this great melée. But one point must needs be added, namely, that the Austrian retreat was covered by fearfully destructive artillery. Six or seven hundred guns had been thundering on both sides during the day and the Austrians had left but few upon the field of battle. On the other hand their loss in killed and wounded

[1] According to the very concise bulletin of Archduke Charles, they took from us six thousand prisoners, including three Generals.

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amounted to nearly twenty-five thousand men, while ours, although Napoleon in his bulletin calculated it at *fifteen hundred killed and three or four thousand wounded*, was at least as great.[1] The pursuit by our cavalry was so languidly carried out that even on the next day, 7th July, our head quarters had no precise information as to the enemy's line of retreat, some supposing that he had fallen back on Moravia, others affirming that he had gone to Bohemia.

Towards evening, when all was over, scouts from Archduke John's army were seen hovering in the neighbourhood of Leopoldsdorf, and the apparition caused an indescribable panic amongst the victors. The Austrians, however, unfortunately for them, were not on the spot to take advantage of the confusion, and our soldiers quickly recovered from their false alarm. But the sad episode definitively proved to the most short-sighted, that however much our troops might have increased in number during the last few years, they had perceptibly deteriorated in quality. Wagram was still a victory, it is true, but a victory without prestige, and almost without result, especially if compared with those that had preceded it. Such was the effect, regarding it from a strictly military point of view, of the conscriptions by anticipation, the arbitrary amalgamation of twenty different nationalities in a combat against their own cause, of the deploying of colossal masses in which matter trampled on mind, of the passive servility of commanders, and the blind idolatry of the soldiers, and lastly, of an authority so jealously guarded by the master and of his overweening confidence in his own infallibility. These elements of degeneracy now inherent in the *Grande Armée* were far from having as yet produced all their consequences, but they had already considerably weakened its unity, discipline, force of cohesion, and

[1] It amounted in reality to twenty-seven thousand killed or wounded. This difference is explained by the disposal of the two armies. Ours being concentrated, whilst the Austrian line was of unlimited extent, its fire necessarily took more effect. Oudinot's corps alone, according to that Marshal's report, lost eight thousand nine hundred and forty-six men, and the Séras division alone suffered so severely that it had to be disbanded after the battle. (*Mémoires* of Prince Eugène.)

resources of a purely moral nature, such as self-abnegation, constancy, and that combination of disinterestedness, sacrifice and patriotism, which is called military virtue. Great individual courage still existed amongst our soldiers, no doubt, and, at certain moments, even heroic impulse. Of this they had given a thousand proofs at Wagram, but they no longer possessed that equable and sustained ardour which can animate and support an army, and carry it along, independent of its commander. A most characteristic proof of this is to be found in one of Napoleon's orders. Wishing to prevent the numberless desertions which took place during the combat, under pretext of carrying the wounded to the ambulances, he commanded that all the wounded, who were incapable of retiring by themselves, should be left on the field until the end of the action. He afterwards defended himself for having given this inhuman order and, according to his custom, accused of calumny those writers who had noted the fact; but in his *Correspondence* the draft of a proclamation may be read—in his own handwriting from beginning to end—in which the following words occur: 'It is forbidden, *in the name of honour*, to leave the battle-field for the purpose of helping the wounded, while the battle is raging.' As I mention the circumstance simply for its deep significance, and not with the object, more or less superfluous, of merely accusing Napoleon of insensibility, it matters little whether he published the prohibition or not; it is quite sufficient that he should have thought of doing so. That in itself was a novel and sinister fact. It was a measure which had never been found necessary either under the Republic or the Consulate, for no one would have thought of issuing such an order to an army fighting for its mother-country or for liberty; nay more, not even to soldiers fighting for mere glory[1].

[1] See for Wagram—the letters and bulletins of Napoleon; Archduke Charles' bulletin; the reports of Macdonald, Marmont, Bernadotte, Oudinot, and Boudet; the *Correspondance* of Prince Eugène; the *Mémoires* of Masséna, edited from his papers by General Koch; the *Mémoires* of Marmont; *Mémoires sur la guerre de* 1809 by General Pelet; *Mémoires* of Grouchy; *Mémoires* of Savary; and the narratives by the political and military historians, Jomini, Thiers, &c.

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But the Emperor's genius, although occasionally and temporarily obscured by his increasing infatuation, was still powerful enough to supply every need. Nor was it merely by the force and fertility of his ideas that he had vanquished his adversary; it was far more by his strength of will, his foresight, the superiority of his efforts and of his calculations, and by the miracles wrought by his astounding activity; for, although it be undoubtedly true that moral force triumphs in the long run, it is equally true that moral force does not alone consist in the justice of a cause. Strict rights and those generous passions which they engender are of no avail, unless also accompanied by that intellect, energy, perseverance, constant study, and fearless action which alone form great captains, strong nations, and invincible armies. In this respect Archduke Charles, though he displayed the rarest qualities on the day of battle, utterly failed to show them on its eve or morrow, and, like Napoleon's other adversaries, had still much to learn from his fortunate conqueror.

A few days after the battle of Wagram the Archduke gave a fresh and most striking proof of that indecision which paralysed his great military talents. Our army was continuing its uncertain and scattered pursuit of the Austrians along three different routes. Masséna was advancing by Hollabrunn, Marmont by Laa to Znaïm, and Davout towards Nikolsburg, Napoleon meantime remaining behind at Wolkersdorf with Oudinot and the reserves, while the army of Italy covered Vienna with the Saxons and the Würtembergers. Marmont was desired to combine his operations with those of Davout who had been the first to take the route he now followed. Accustomed, however, to act alone in his little empire of Dalmatia, and impatient to distinguish himself, Marmont made no efforts to obey this order, although he was perfectly aware that the Austrians had retreated to Bohemia and not to Moravia. In fact, the Archduke was that moment at Znaïm, where, with an army as fully concentrated as ours was scattered, he occupied the strong positions afforded by the gradually rising heights around that town.

On the 10th July Marmont, in the most thoughtless manner,

found himself with very inferior numbers suddenly in the midst of the Austrian forces. The two nearest of our corps d'armée—those of Davout and of Masséna—were at least two marches distant from him, and even Napoleon, behind them, did not show his habitual vigilance. He was still intoxicated by his victory, and considered Austria annihilated. In a letter to Clarke he writes: 'I have established my head quarters in the house that was occupied by that *wretched Francis II.* . . . . I fired a hundred thousand bullets at them!' The Archduke might have made us pay dearly for such temerity. Marmont's and Masséna's two corps, especially, were so compromised that it would have been easy to crush them one after the other, but he did not know how to take advantage of this unexpected good luck

Marmont was the first to perceive the danger of his position. Showing a bold front in order to make the enemy believe he was supported, instead of retreating, he attacked the defences of Znaïm with a temerity that would have been madness if it had not been done by design. It is true he did not succeed in taking them, but he held his positions until nightfall, and in this manner the Archduke lost one of the finest opportunities of revenge which fortune had offered this over-cautious genius during the whole course of the campaign. On the following day, the 11th of July, the combat was commencing, under conditions far more favourable to us—Masséna, moreover, had meanwhile come to our rescue—when news arrived that an armistice had been signed between the two armies, and the fighting at once ended. (July 11, 1809.)

CHAPTER XIV.

CAMPAIGN IN PORTUGAL, 1809.—SOULT DRIVEN FROM PORTUGAL BY WELLINGTON. (*January—May*, 1809.)

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THE armistice of Znaïm did not, and could not, produce peace. Austria in fact was far from being definitively vanquished. Not only had she inflicted heavy losses on us at an immense distance from our frontiers, but, for the first time since Napoleon had been her adversary, she had of late more than once made his victories doubtful. She had disputed the ground from Abensberg to Wagram with unheard-of tenacity, and for a moment had even made Napoleon's star pale at Essling. These successes, though negative, were the more striking from being at the end of a long series of disastrous wars, each of which had cost her a portion of her territory, while the forces of her enemy had gone on increasing in an inverse ratio. Despite so many affronts and so much dismemberment, Austria seemed stronger than at the beginning of this long struggle; Napoleon, on the contrary, notwithstanding his numberless conquests and his aggrandisement, struck with less certainty, and appeared to have lost rather than gained by the indefinite extension of his empire. One might have said that his superiority —pre-eminently the moral superiority of genius and of discipline, and the primary cause of his triumphs, as it was the sole guarantee of lasting victory—was about to pass from his camp to that of his adversaries, above all, since he had begun to rely on the number and bulk of his armies. Austria consequently had risen in her own estimation and in that of Europe, while she also still possessed enormous resources. Instigated by Stadion, whose hatred was unconquerable, the war party was in nowise disheartened. The retreat of the Austrian army to

Bohemia after the battle of Wagram was, no doubt, a strategic fault, and for every reason it would have been wiser to withdraw to Hungary. But that same army was still a solid compact force, backed by many very strong places; and diversions, dangerous to us, could be calculated upon. The corps of Giulay and Chastelar, for instance, had re-formed in our rear, menacing our communications in a line that extended from Leoben nearly to Trieste, while the Tyrolese insurrection was acquiring alarming proportions. With such means of resistance at her disposal, Austria could not look upon her cause as lost. Moreover, she had legitimate ground for hope in the two great warlike operations on which the eyes of the whole world were then fixed, that of Sir Arthur Wellesley in Spain, and the British expedition to Holland.

The Court of Austria hoped, not without apparent reason, that, even supposing these two enterprises should prove but partially successful, they would sooner or later place Napoleon in a most critical position, and force him to retrograde, or, at the very least, to weaken his army, in order to support his empire in whatever point it were most menaced. Hence, it was important to wait for that moment before renewing hostilities. The time should meanwhile be passed in active preparation by strengthening the army, improving its position, and making Hungary its basis of support instead of Bohemia. Time seemed to promise every advantage to our adversaries, and Napoleon, notwithstanding the somewhat artificial lustre which he had shed upon his victory, must have keenly felt the real instability of his situation and the exhaustion of his troops, otherwise he would never have consented to grant his enemies a respite, instead of thoroughly defeating them according to his usual method. Thus actuated by different but equally plausible motives, both sides, on the pretext of negotiating, determined to wait until the issue of the contest already begun in the Tagus valley, and on the eve of beginning on the shores of Holland, should have given a decided turn to events.

Affairs in Spain had fallen back into an uncertain, precarious, and tottering condition ever since Napoleon had quitted that country to make his preparations for war against Austria, at the end of January, 1809. His short and brilliant campaign against

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the Spanish insurrection had been more showy than productive of real results. The valour of his old legions of Austerlitz and Jena, the numerical superiority of his troops, whose effective strength at one time amounted to four hundred thousand men, the temporary concentration of his resources within somewhat restricted limits, the unity which the operations derived from his actual presence, had enabled him easily to disperse armies possessing neither discipline nor organisation. But he had in nowise destroyed them; nor had he definitively established himself anywhere; and the efficient, though hopeless diversion, which Sir John Moore caused in the north of the Peninsula, had made a failure of the theatrical effect by which he had intended to intimidate his enemies, and impress their imaginations. In the failure of this grand stage-effect lay the contradiction which events gave to his proud promise, that he would 'plant his victorious eagles on the ramparts of Lisbon.'

To be obliged to return to France without having performed this promise, and without having kept an engagement entered into before all Europe, was for him relatively a real check. But it was not his pride alone that was wounded by it. The conquest of Portugal was not only a means of acting on opinion and of impressing the public mind; it was quite as much a true strategic necessity. So long as Portugal was not subdued, so long as revolt was maintained in a country which for a hundred and fifty leagues bordered such important provinces of Spain as Andalusia, Estremadura, the kingdom of Leon and Galicia, our rule in the Peninsula could be but nominal. For this reason it was that Napoleon took especial care before starting for Paris to draw up a detailed plan for that very conquest which he had been unable personally to achieve, and confided its execution to Marshal Soult, one of his most able lieutenants.

According to this plan, dictated at Valladolid, and dated January 1, 1809, Marshal Soult (whom we left with Ney before Corunna, where the English had just effected their retreat), was, after taking that place, to march with four divisions upon Oporto, and then upon Lisbon by the most direct route, that leading by Tuy and Braga. His communications were to be covered by Ney's corps, which was to remain in Galicia. By the Emperor's calculations, Soult could reach Oporto on the

5th of February, and Lisbon on the 15th. At the same moment that he would begin to threaten the capital, Marshal Victor's corps d'armée, then encamped in the Tagus valley, was to pass by a side movement into the valley of the Guadiana and advance to Merida, ready to support Soult if necessary, or, if this were not required, then to march on Andalusia, the conquest of which he was to undertake and accomplish.[1] All our operations in the Peninsula were subordinated to Soult's success in Portugal, excepting those of St. Cyr in Catalonia, which was a kind of entrenched camp, where that general acted as he pleased, and could freely indulge his love of independent command. Until Soult could achieve the task confided to him by the Emperor, every other plan for the subjection of Spain was to be postponed. All our other corps d'armée were to limit themselves to the occupation of the positions we already held. To Soult alone belonged the initiative and the honour of assuming the offensive, whilst Joseph, with Jourdan as chief of the staff, and a corps d'armée composed of the Sebastiani and Desolle divisions, with the reserve, was to hold Madrid and New Castile, Mortier and Suchet to occupy Aragon, Ney Galicia, and Victor our advanced positions on the Tagus. Lapisse remained at Salamanca, Kellerman at Valladolid, Bonnet in Biscay, while a host of other detachments guarded our communications between Madrid and the Pyrenees.

According to the most trustworthy calculations these scattered corps constituted a force of not less than 300,000 men, even after taking into account the removal of large numbers by Napoleon to the army of the Danube. But the difference which exists between the nominal and the effective strength of an army, at all times considerable, assumed proportions in Spain unknown elsewhere, and formed one of the most characteristic features of this lamentable war. The number of non-available men—such, for instance, as the non-combatants, the sick, stragglers, or others belonging to no special class, those employed in the transport service, in communications, detachments, &c.—who usually averaged one-sixth of the whole, in Spain amounted to nearly one-half of the total effective force. In this way Soult, who was supposed to have forty-seven thousand

[1] Berthier to Soult, January 1, 1809.

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men under his orders, in reality had not more than twenty-five thousand combatants, while Ney, instead of thirty-five had only seventeen thousand. Nor was the spirit of the troops any longer what it had been. Obliged to pillage without mercy in order to live, and forced to protect themselves against a warfare of surprises and ambuscades by fearful reprisals, they were still further demoralised by the rivalries, jealousies, and open distrust which in Napoleon's absence arose amongst the generals, dividing the command and lowering their authority. The troops complained that they were sacrificed in an unprofitable enterprise, full of danger yet inglorious, and where their valour, out of their master's sight, would win none of the rewards reserved for their more fortunate companions.

This latter grievance, far from being confined to the army, was shared by all the functionaries and officials of the kingdom, beginning at the very highest, King Joseph himself. The harsh law of living upon the conquered country and expecting nothing from France, which Napoleon imposed upon his troops, weighed even more heavily on the civil functionaries, who were expected to shew more consideration and to observe some outward appearance of legality. Nevertheless, they could not, any more than the army, hope for either pay or recompense in this place of exile, and, in order to live, they were reduced to the most miserable expedients. King Joseph in particular felt the necessity all the more keenly that he was more deeply attached than ever to his favourite chimera of gaining the hearts of the Spaniards by gentleness. From the very morrow of Napoleon's departure for Paris we see this poor King pursuing his brother with lamentations, in the hope of obtaining some help whereby to console his subjects, to pay his officials, and to stop, if only partially, the universal system of spoliation: 'I have not a penny to give any one,' wrote Joseph. 'I see my guards still wearing the same coats I gave them four years ago. All my servants are still billeted on the town. . . . . What can I do without contributions, capital, or money?[1] Every Spaniard would be at my feet if they only knew my kind feelings.'[2] Napoleon, with the view of getting immediate resources, had confiscated the estates of the ten wealthiest families in the

[1] Correspondence of King Joseph, Feb. 10, 1800. [2] Ibid., March 7, 1800.

kingdom, but had reserved to himself the right of disposing of the confiscated property. Joseph, under the pressure of his immediate necessities, had been induced to extend the sequestration to double that number. A descent of this kind is slippery, and, as a moralist of the day observed, when confiscation is adopted as a punishment, it always ends in punishment being resorted to in order to confiscate. But Fréville, who had been appointed administrator of the estates sequestered by Napoleon, fancied he was equally authorised to lay his hand on those seized by Joseph, which gave rise to deplorable scenes, ill-calculated to raise, in the eyes of the Spanish nation, that government which was ordered to regenerate it. 'M. de Fréville has taken the liberty of sending by night and carrying off the keys of the houses I have placed under sequestration, and he has desired the superintendent of the *émigrés* not to obey my agents. It is the talk of the town to-day. I have ordered M. de Fréville, who seems to me to be out of his mind, to give back the keys of the houses to the administrators of the estates. . . . M. de Fréville does not recognise my authority; and is no doubt ill.'[1]

The proceeds realised by the confiscations, the sale of wool seized in certain towns, the city tolls of Madrid, the melting of what Joseph naïvely called his *plate*, namely, masterpieces of the goldsmith's and silversmith's art which had formed a portion of the heirlooms inherited by the Kings of Spain; these were the only resources upon which the treasury could calculate; and the only means of influencing his brother which Joseph possessed was by perpetually threatening to abdicate; at the same time, he never carried the threat into effect. In reality, Joseph loved power, not so much for the power itself as for the satisfaction it afforded his vanity; and, though his threat of abdication, and retiring to Mortfontaine, were not always feigned, he never failed to repent of them speedily, invariably disappointing many of his friends who, wishing to extricate themselves from difficulties, had been simple enough to rely on his energy and resolution.[2] Hence his complaints were ineffective, and this advocate of kindness and gentleness was

[1] Correspondence of King Joseph, March 19, 1809.

[2] Miot de Melito: Roederer.

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always forced in the end to become the minister of a merciless policy. The absolute opposition existing between his views and those of Napoleon with regard to the system that ought to be pursued in Spain, was in itself an abiding source of weakness; for, if a policy based on clemency was as idle an Utopia as one founded on severity, it was at least necessary to know how to choose one or the other, and the worst of all was to have no system whatever. Owing to the never-ceasing fluctuations, clemency ended by seeming to be nothing but weakness, while severity resembled cruelty.

This lamentable discordance on the question of general policy was further complicated by a much graver discordance as to the military operations. According to all the official declarations, Joseph was still supposed, under Napoleon's superintendence, to keep the chief direction of the war in his hands. No system could be more ill-judged, as the sad events at Baylen had already proved. Moreover, Joseph was far from being capable of such a lieutenancy. Still, if he were to act under the advice of Marshal Jourdan, a judicious, experienced, and wise counsellor, and of Desolle, formerly chief-of-the-staff under Moreau, a good officer whom Joseph had honourably rescued from his long disgrace, it might have been possible to remedy, at least, some of the drawbacks incidental to the direction of the war from such a distance. Unfortunately however Napoleon had no idea of the kind. He reposed, justly it is true, no confidence in Joseph's military talents, but he also affected, most unjustly, to despise Marshal Jourdan's. Two sentiments influenced him on this occasion: one of rancour against the honourable attachment which the general had preserved for his old republican opinions, and the other, a violent antipathy against all those whose judgment was not dazzled by the grandeur of the new régime. Blind hatred was less obnoxious to him than a discreet and rational opposition, for he knew that passionate temperaments easily veer from one extreme to another, while reflecting minds preserve their consistency equally under blame or praise. What he could not submit to was the sensation of being criticised. The authority which he had left to Joseph and Jourdan, was, consequently, purely nominal,—barely what was considered

essential to the prestige of so feeble a Royalty. Every chief of a corps was instructed to correspond directly with his Minister Clarke, who alone was authorised to give them orders; an instruction which they faithfully obeyed, especially as it favoured their taste for independence, and was also most flattering to their vanity.

Conflicts without number at once arose between the different Marshals—each of whom, in the pride of his recent emancipation, was anxious to act alone, and was jealous, to an extreme, of his prerogatives,—and at the same time with the Court of Madrid, on the other hand, which persisted in not understanding that its military supremacy was simply a form of etiquette, or at most a consulting power, a mere species of registry-office. Hence, the commanders of corps had to await their instructions from Paris, which required at least a fortnight, and often two months for transmission. It then became necessary to protect such instructions against Joseph and his counsellors, or, at the very least, to try to make them agree with the orders received from Madrid; for, in spite of every drawback, a certain deference had to be observed towards the brother of the Emperor. It were useless to insist on the contradictions and the impracticability inherent in such a plan; but the incredible part consists in the fact that the principal author of the system, he who maintained it in defiance of representations made by every man of sense, complained, when writing to Joseph, that affairs in Spain lacked 'a central and instantaneous impetus!'

How could this most necessary impetus be central, when each Marshal considered himself an independent chief acting on his own responsibility, or received orders that were either tardy or contradictory, according as they were issued from Paris or Madrid? How could it be instantaneous, when these same orders, transmitted to him by slow and uncertain means, only reached him after events had so modified his position that they became perfectly inapplicable? As Joseph with much good sense remarked, Napoleon's instructions ought to have been simply 'general directions which could have been modified according to changes that might have taken place in Spanish affairs after the instructions had been sent from Paris,' and they ought to have been addressed to 'Marshal Jourdan alone,

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so that the army should know that they bore the impress of head-quarters in Spain.'[1] Under this condition alone could an impetus become central and instantaneous; a matter, in fact, of such dire necessity, that the most inadequate generalship within reach of passing events would have been a thousand times preferable to such distant and incoherent guidance.

Besides these causes of failure, which though then latent were to burst forth with irresistible force when our armies began to act, we must note the incurable illusions fostered by Napoleon and even by Joseph as to the facility of the enterprise. Napoleon, for instance, made Berthier write to Ney at the very outset of the campaign, that, 'if he could not employ his battalions in hindering the English communicating with the shore, *he must make the inhabitants of the country undertake that task.*'[2] Here was the continuation of a persistent error; the same which, a short time previously, had induced him to contemplate the creation of a national guard in Catalonia for the purpose of suppressing the insurrection. About the same period, Joseph wrote to his brother that Romana earnestly desired to make his submission and was only deterred through fear of not '*obtaining his pardon!*'[3] Nor are these the only traits of the kind. Optimism of this description, which seems puerile to us who know what our situation then was, proves what a prodigious distance separated these two minds from the reality of passing events.

Such serious mistakes naturally exercised a fatal influence on the conduct of the military operations. Marshal Soult, who, according to the Imperial instructions of the 1st of January, was to have been at Oporto on the 5th of February, and at Lisbon on the 15th, had, on the last-named date, reached no farther than the Minho,—the river which forms the boundary between Galicia and Portugal. His army, reduced to the effective strength of twenty-five or twenty-six thousand men, had, it is true, been re-organised at St. Jago de Compostella, but it had scarcely yet recovered from the fatigues and privations endured in its pursuit of Sir John Moore. Still, although it had been thus forcibly delayed, our entry into Portugal took place under

[1] Correspondence of King Joseph. Joseph to Napoleon, April 19, 1809.
[2] Berthier to Ney, February 18, 1809.
[3] Joseph to Napoleon, March 28, 1809.

the most favourable conditions possible. Owing to the return of Moore's army to England, the only obstacles in our path arose from the difficulty of the roads in winter, from Romana's scattered bands, which, however, merely harassed our left on the side of Ribadavia, and from the revolutionary forces of Portugal itself, not very formidable to veteran troops like those of Soult. An English corps no doubt remained at Lisbon, one which Moore had left there under Sir John Cradock, but it was an inconsiderable detachment, and moreover, could not quit the capital, having to protect it from any attack through the valley of the Tagus.

Convinced of the necessity of taking advantage of these circumstances, Soult, in order to surprise and disconcert the enemy by a rapid march, opened the campaign by first appearing on the Minho. Unfortunately that river was swollen to an unusual degree by the winter rains, all the means of passage were destroyed, and the attempts of our troops to cross it at Campo Sancos, near its mouth, failed, though not without causing us considerable loss. Instead of wasting precious time, however, in an ill-timed struggle against nature, Soult at once modified his plans. Leaving the greatest portion of his war-material at Tuy, he reascended the Minho to Orense, continuously fighting the skirmishers from Romana's bands, who disputed the ground inch by inch on his route. At Orense he at length succeeded in crossing the river, and, after having repulsed but not destroyed Romana, he plunged into the difficult region of Tras-os-Montes,—that mountainous district of which the principal defiles lead into the valley of the Douro. The Marquis de la Romana, being discontented with his Portuguese allies after having fought some battles in their company, barely passed the frontier which separates the two countries, when he withdrew into Spain, turning upon our rear in the valley of the Syl. Soult has been reproached with having allowed him to escape; but if he had pursued an adversary who was so difficult to catch in such a country, and had not moved on until he destroyed him, it is pretty certain that he never could have entered Portugal.

However this might have been, the Marshal was not able to appear before Chaves,—the first Portuguese town he met with on the frontier,—until the 10th of March, 1809. The Portu-

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guese forces, after Romana's retreat, barely counted eight or ten thousand men. They were commanded by General Sylveira, and composed, as elsewhere, of some regular troops, of the militia, and of peasants. This was the first line of defence. Then came a second army of about twenty-five thousand men collected at Braga, under the orders of Bernardin Freire and Eben; and lastly, a much larger gathering at Oporto, commanded by the Bishop of that town. True, these were multitudes rather than armies, but multitudes worked up to the highest pitch of excitement and displaying an enthusiasm almost unexampled even in the war in Spain.

On this, as on every occasion when the civil, political, or military authority falls under the influence of popular passion, the wildest decisions were those which found most favour, especially when coloured by patriotic sentiments. Chaves was an untenable position, and the generals determined not to attempt to hold it, preferring to reserve their forces for the guerilla warfare of surprises and ambuscades which had proved so injurious to us. But the populace, instigated by their leaders, obliged Sylveira to leave a detachment of three thousand men in the town, which resulted, as might have been foreseen, in useless destruction and an inevitable capitulation after a resistance of three days. (March 13.) From Chaves, Soult marched straight to Braga, where the same scenes took place, accompanied this time, as invariably happens in the end, by murder. Bernardin Freire, seeing that Braga was as difficult a position to defend as Chaves, determined to spare the town the horrors of a storm, and to save the Portuguese cause from the results of a defeat. Consequently, he ordered his militia to evacuate Braga, but they mutinied and killed him, almost in sight of our advance guard commanded by Franceschi.[1] A few hours later they also massacred his aide-de-camp, Villaboas, and next day about twenty prisoners, whom Soult had sent back with proposals of peace. But ferocity instead of stimulating courage always lessens it, and acts of this description were not calculated to imbue troops with strength and calm steadiness, in the absence of which an army can only be a confused, floating, powerless mass. Hence, it is easy to understand that the positions

[1] Report of General Eben to Sir John Cradock.

occupied by the Portuguese on Mount Adaufe outside Braga, being attacked by us at nine in the morning, were in our possession at ten o'clock. The fugitives dispersed in all directions, pursued by our cavalry, who sabred them mercilessly, in revenge for the cruelties committed on their comrades, and the regular troops alone opposed us, though but feebly, at Ponte-Ponto and at Falperra.[1]

Soult left the Heudelet division at Braga, and then endeavoured to reassure the inhabitants and entice them back to the town by acts of clemency and humanity. Having rested his troops and taken advantage of the large resources which the possession of Braga placed at his disposal, he resumed his march on Oporto. His army, however, had been considerably reduced by the detachments left at Braga, Chaves, and Tuy, and by the constant fighting, which, though never formidable, had been of daily occurrence. The scenes of confusion which had taken place at Braga were but trifling compared to the immense disorder that reigned at Oporto. There the Bishop had been entrusted with the supreme command, and it was he who directed the military operations. The whole population had taken up arms, and displayed extraordinary ardour, but no judgment, in raising a line of fortifications above Oporto extending from the Douro to the sea. Although mounted with two hundred guns, they possessed at no point the requisite solidity. As always happens under such circumstances, the people accused those of treason, whose clear-sightedness pointed out the dangers of the undertaking, and, with the first news of the misfortunes at Braga, they massacred some twenty of the most enlightened citizens of Oporto, dragging their bodies through the streets. Showing less cruelty however towards strangers than towards their own fellow-countrymen, they spared General Foy, who had been surprised while making a reconnaissance in the neighbourhood.

Soult arrived before the place on the 27th of March. He summoned it to surrender by a letter addressed to the Bishop, in which he represented the uselessness of resistance and the inevitable disasters of a combat in the streets of so rich and

[1] *Mémoires sur les Opérations militaires en Galice et en Portugal*, by Lenoble. *History of the Peninsular War*: Napier.

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populous a city. But all in vain. On the 29th, therefore, he sent his columns to assault the town, and the simplest manœuvres were sufficient to remove every obstacle. He divided his army into three corps: the two wings were to make feint attacks on the two extreme points of the extended line of defence, while the centre was to force its way into the town. Merle, who on the previous day had occupied a portion of the entrenchments raised by the Portuguese on the left of Oporto, vigorously renewed his attack, thereby drawing their forces off to that side, while Delaborde and Franceschi threw themselves impetuously on the right. Instantly, a mass of men, numbering from forty to fifty thousand, might be seen rushing from right to left, and left to right, in the utmost confusion, leaving the centre totally unprotected. This was exactly what had been anticipated. Mermet at once advanced with his columns, and, overthrowing every obstacle in his path, penetrated into the town, making straight for the bridge of boats on the Douro, the only retreat open to the fugitives he was driving before him. Thither, in fearful disorder, a maddened crowd of women, children, and soldiers of every arm pressed forward, exposed on one side to our bayonets, and on the other to the fire of the Portuguese guns, which were thundering from the opposite bank in the hope of driving us from the bridge. The boats soon sunk beneath the weight of the advancing crowd, the bridge broke, and the unfortunate fugitives were precipitated into the river. Overpowered by this horrible scene, our soldiers stopped for a moment in order to help the victims, then quickly repaired the bridge, and rushing forward, carried the positions on the left bank. Meantime the combat was going on in the town, but when its defenders at length perceived the folly of further resistance, it was too late to control the fury of our soldiers. The fight became a massacre and Oporto was given up to pillage, devastation, and all those excesses in which an army indulges when once it has lost respect for discipline, and is no more than a military mob. The Bishop of Oporto had ensured his safety the day before by passing over to the left bank of the Douro.[1]

[1] According to an eye-witness, who wrote almost under Soult's dictation, the Portuguese had 8000 men killed at Oporto, while we lost 80. Contrasts of this kind explain our popularity in Portugal. (See Lenoble: *Mémoires sur les Opérations militaires en Galice et en Portugal.*)

Marshal Soult was obliged to stop at Oporto to rest his troops, to wait for his war-material which had been left at Tuy, and to restore, if possible, his communications with Galicia. Oporto, which is the most important town in Portugal after Lisbon, possessed immense resources of every kind. The Douro afforded us an almost impassable line of defence against any attack from the South. It was possible, therefore, to obtain a firm footing at Oporto, but still, this was far from realising the programme laid down by Napoleon! Though the beginning of April was close at hand, scarcely a quarter of the distance between Lisbon and Galicia had been passed. Not even a tenth of this much-coveted kingdom had been conquered, and if we were not reduced to stand on the defensive, we were at least forced into inaction. Soult, nevertheless, had hitherto done everything that circumstances had permitted him, and there was nothing to reproach him with. The only culprit was he who persisted in denying the existence of the obstacles that thwarted his fancies. In Portugal, as in Spain, the insurrection rose up again like a living barrier in the rear of our soldiers the moment they had made, at the cost of blood, an opening for their passage. In order to retake the ground occupied the day before, it would have been necessary to turn back incessantly. No sooner had we quitted Tuy, where our principal depôt was situated, than Romana's bands, momentarily dispersed, reappeared to invest it. The evil was even greater at Chaves, for Sylveira, whom we had there defeated, immediately captured our garrison with all our sick. Lorge and Heudelet arrived in time, it is true, to relieve Tuy, but Loison never even attempted to retake Chaves, and, after a little skirmishing, had to be satisfied with posting himself at Baltar, on the lower range of the Tras-os-Montes.

All our other operations in Spain were subjected to delay in consequence of Soult being thus arrested in his progress, so dependent on each other were the links in Napoleon's plan, and the movements of our armies so closely intertwined with success in Portugal. If this expedition were to fail, our operations in Spain would be suspended or paralysed. More than two months had elapsed since any news from Soult had reached Madrid. In fact, no one there had the least idea what had become of him after the 24th of February, and the absence of

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information was supplied by vain and contradictory conjectures as to his probable movements. Napoleon, on the 13th, supposing him to be close to Lisbon, if not already master of it, urged Joseph to make Victor perform the march that had been agreed upon, to Merida and Andalusia, and Joseph, no less impatient, desired Victor to carry out the Emperor's orders.[1] But our armies in Spain found the same difficulty in advancing that Soult did in Portugal. They were each held at bay by a Spanish corps of almost equal force, and, if they made any attempt to destroy it, would be drawn away from their centre of action. Moreover, they would run the risk of losing sight of their real purpose, that of supporting Soult, or, by leaving the enemy in their rear, would, without any doubt, have their communications broken off.

Victor, in Estremadura, stood against old Gregorio della Cuesta, a general of little talent, but very brave and obstinate. Lapisse was hemmed in at Salamanca by numberless insurgent bands, the chief of which was commanded by Sir Robert Wilson. These two generals, expected to co-operate with Soult, were too much occupied with their own troubles to shew much anxiety as to an undertaking the results of which seemed most problematical. Our army of La Mancha, which was to support them at a distance under the orders of Sebastiani, was itself opposed by another Spanish army commanded by Cartoajal, and backed by the Sierra-Morena. However, it had become necessary to act vigorously on the offensive, if only to preserve liberty of movement. Towards the middle of March, therefore, Victor quitted Talavera to march against Cuesta. Having crossed the Tagus he overthrew Cuesta's outposts at Meza-d'Ibor, pursued him into the valley of the Guadiana, and then defeated him with immense loss at Medelin, on the very day that Soult was entering Oporto (March 28, 1809). At the same time, Sebastiani met Cartoajal at Ciudad-Real, beat him, captured his artillery, and pursued him to the foot of the Sierra-Morena (March 27).

These brilliant successes, however, produced but little effect. Even in the very midst of victory our troops beheld their com-

[1] Napoleon to Joseph, March 13, 1809. Joseph to Napoleon, March 22, 1809.

munications seriously menaced by an enemy that dispersed at one point only to reform at another.[1] Victor, however, advanced as far as Merida. There, finding it impossible to march on Andalusia or, on the other hand, to reach Portugal, being fettered by instructions which forbade him to attempt any important operation until Soult should have arrived at Lisbon, he reinforced his corps by the Lapisse division, an addition which had become indispensable to him, although Salamanca, a province of great importance to us, was thereby given over to the insurgent party. Having effected this object, he determined to await the turn of events. Historians who have sought to apologise for Soult[2] have strongly reproached Victor for this inactivity. But the orders he had received from Napoleon were formal, and he was not called upon to modify them. If he had been tempted to do so at his own risk and peril, Dupont's fate warned him of the cost of such independence. Moreover, it may be asked what advantage could have been derived from a march to Lisbon, when Soult was still at Oporto? And if Victor's communications with Madrid were difficult enough as it was, what would they have become if he had advanced fifty leagues further, leaving a fortress like Badajoz in his rear, without mentioning the remnants of Cuesta's army, or the innumerable guerillas that were scouring the country?

Had Napoleon been in Spain, or delegated his authority to any one who could have ventured to decide in such a contingency, it is clear that in view of the prolonged uncertainty as to Soult, some great efforts would have been made to disengage or reinforce him, either by sending Ney from Galicia to Portugal, or by bringing to the Douro a strong detachment of the fourth corps that had remained stationary at Logrono under the orders of Mortier. But Mortier was no more master of his own movements than his colleagues were. When Jourdan asked him to advance at least as far as Valladolid in order to see if he could place himself thence in communication with Soult or Ney, of

[1] Extract from the *Mémoires inédits* of Marshal Jourdan, quoted by M. Thiers.

[2] Napier amongst others.

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whom they had also heard nothing for a long time, all that Mortier would venture upon was to establish himself at Burgos, where his presence was of no use to any one.

Ney, happily, required no assistance. Although he had a hundred leagues of coast to defend, he had succeeded in maintaining himself in Galicia. This, however, was by dint of incessant fighting, and by sacrificing his communications with our army in Portugal, which was incompatible with the concentration of his troops, now a primary element of his existence; in short, by disobeying Napoleon. The Emperor had instructed him to fortify himself at Lugo, in the centre of Galicia, as a starting-point whence he could diverge in any direction necessary for the subjugation of the province. Lugo, no doubt, was the *geographical* centre of Galicia, but it was far from being its centre from the point of view of population, riches, influence, or political importance. Corunna united all these conditions, and on that account alone seemed intended as the natural pivot of our occupation, despite its peculiar situation. And, as the danger which chiefly threatened us in Galicia was to be sought, not in the centre but along the sea-board of that province, where we perpetually had to defend ourselves against the landing of the English, it may be said that, even from a strategic point of view, Ney acted very wisely in preferring to station himself at Corunna rather than at Lugo.

The month of April, 1809, was passed in painful uncertainty. While we were condemned, by our vicious system of operations rather than by the strength of our adversaries, to so dangerous a state of mere expectancy, an event of incalculable importance was taking place in Portugal; for, the conqueror of Vimiero, Sir Arthur Wellesley, landed at Lisbon on the 22nd of April. He was received with enthusiasm, and his presence seemed likely to infuse vigour into the Portuguese insurrection, and to give it a totally new direction.

General Sir John Cradock, having considerably diminished his forces by the number of troops and quantity of stores he had sent to Sir John Moore in the preceding campaign, and being moreover neglected, nay, almost abandoned by his own government, had not stirred outside Lisbon during the whole

winter of 1809, except to occupy some of the strong defensive positions in its immediate neighbourhood. The British Cabinet was at that time much occupied with a plan for fixing the base of operations for the English army in the Peninsula at Cadiz, instead of at Lisbon. The latter, it is true, had serious drawbacks as a base whence to operate either in the valley of the Tagus or of the Guadiano. An army starting thence would necessarily find itself exposed to attack on its rear or flanks by an enemy occupying Old Castile, the kingdom of Leon, or, in short, any of the Northern Provinces. On the other hand, if it rested on Cadiz, itself an impregnable position, and then operated in La Mancha, leaving the defiles of the Sierra Morena in its rear, it might penetrate into the heart of Spain without having once exposed its flanks to unforeseen attack or in any way endangered its communications.

But the distrust shown by the Spaniards, justified perhaps by the vicinity of Gibraltar, although they were later convinced of their error, had caused the failure of this plan. The detachment sent to occupy Cadiz had been obliged to return to Lisbon (March 12, 1809) without having been allowed to enter the town. Hence the English Government decided on assuming the offensive through Portugal, and despatched several successive reinforcements to Sir John Cradock, which he used with much intelligence and activity in forming and disciplining the levies of the Portuguese insurrection. Finally, they sent back to Portugal the officers whom they had inconsiderately recalled on account of the Convention of Cintra, and restored his position to the most eminent amongst them, Sir Arthur Wellesley, who was soon to make us at once hate and admire the glorious name of Wellington. Not only did they declare him free from blame, but they raised him to the dignity of Generalissimo, an authority which was also conferred on him by the Regency of Portugal, and of which honour no one in the army proved himself henceforward more worthy.

Wellesley found himself at the head of an army composed of twenty-five thousand English, of from fifteen to twenty thousand Portuguese regular troops, and a militia of insurgents of at

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least the same amount, but of a very inferior description. Two courses were open to him; to march against Soult or against Victor. In either case he would have to leave Lisbon, if not altogether uncovered, at least much exposed. But Victor was at eighteen days' march from Lisbon, and he could not advance upon that capital without leaving in his rear not only Cuesta's army, which was now reorganized and numbered thirty thousand men, but also the fortresses of Badajoz and Elvas; there was time, consequently, to watch his advance and to hinder his march. Soult, on the contrary, could in four or five days traverse the distance from Oporto to Lisbon without encountering the same obstacles.[1] It was Soult, therefore, that Wellesley determined to strike, in accordance with the plan he had formed the moment he cast a glance at the situation of our armies, namely, from the first hour of his arrival.[2] After having placed Lisbon in a state of defence, posted some corps of observation along the Tagus on the route which Victor would have to take were he to march towards Lisbon, and recommended Cuesta to maintain the defensive until he should himself have beaten Soult, he started for Oporto with an army of twenty-five thousand English and Portuguese, and on the 2nd of May, 1809, arrived at Coïmbra.

While these threatening preparations were being made, Soult was reposing in perfect security at Oporto, ignorant even of dangers of a totally different nature which menaced him in his own camp, created by his own unskilfulness. Having, after his easily-won victory, been forced to remain at Oporto by the increasing number of the enemy who were assembling in his rear, Soult determined, before advancing farther, to achieve the submission of the conquered country. He waited at Oporto for the arrival of succours, without, however, well knowing whence the succours were to come, as all the other operations were dependent on his entry into Lisbon. Firmly entrenched in his strong positions on the Douro, he accustomed

[1] Despatches of the Duke of Wellington. Napier, *Peninsular War*.

[2] Despatches to Castlereagh, April 24 and 27, 1809; to Cuesta, April 29; to Frere, April 29; to Mackenzie, May 1.

himself to look upon Oporto as a province that had been definitively vanquished, and consequently required organization, never doubting that it would ultimately lead to the submission of the whole of Portugal. And, as a first step in this direction, he endeavoured to reassure the inhabitants, and induce them to return to their towns, by humane and conciliatory treatment, as well as by the re-establishment of order and discipline in his army.

The peace-loving and wealthier classes, who had been dismayed by such catastrophes as the sack of Oporto, the military executions and the extravagant cruelties of the insurgent mob, listened readily and joyfully to Soult's declarations, and tried to obtain from him every possible guarantee. The inhabitants of the towns, especially the traders, sent him deputations to express their gratitude in the most flattering terms. Vain by nature, and enchanted with such unhoped-for docility in a population which hitherto had only shown us hatred or indomitable fanaticism, Soult easily allowed himself to be deceived, and egregiously mistook the significance of these demonstrations. In what was only the weariness of disorder, regret for lost affluence, and a desire for tranquillity at any cost, he discovered growing sympathies, confidence inspired by his own personal qualities, and even the possibility of creating a stable and regular order of things in Portugal, by means of a compromise between those who resigned themselves to the existing state of affairs and those who desired absolute independence. And if such a compromise were possible,—as facts seemed to indicate,—why should it not be carried out in the name and for the advantage of him who had originated and prepared it? Why should not Soult himself become the guarantee and the chief representative of such a reconciliation between the great Empire and a people who had hitherto been so hostile to it? Would not this simply be a return to the much-vaunted system of royal vassals? Were not Soult's services quite as brilliant as those of Murat, or of as much value as those chance titles which the ill-sustained honour of a privileged parentage had bestowed on Joseph, Jerome, and Louis?

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There is no exaggeration in attributing ideas to Marshal Soult, which can alone afford a plausible explanation of his conduct, and are, moreover, in perfect conformity with his character. To a facile and humane nature, combined with the carelessness of a condottierro, he united great versatility, a presumption that was more or less boastful, an inborn taste for intrigue and ambition which though shallow, was restless and active, only to end in insatiable cupidity as the last resource of his disappointed hopes. Surrounded and urged on by flatterers, some of whom were no less weary than he of serving a master who wished to arrogate to himself the privilege of thinking of no one else, and others who were impatient to share the favours of a new reign; enchanted perhaps to disguise the military inactivity to which he was reduced under the semblance of a civil political organization; encouraged, moreover, by his isolation, which permitted him to act without control up to the moment when he might decide on accepting the move as definitive or, should it prove abortive, disown it at once,—Marshal Soult did not hesitate officially to instigate a kind of *pronunciamento* in his favour throughout the provinces of the Minho and Oporto, by means of addresses, petitions, and deputations. 'His Excellency the Duke of Dalmatia should be requested to take the reins of Government, to represent the Sovereign, and to invest himself with all the attributes of supreme authority until the Emperor and King shall have chosen a Prince of his house or of his choice to reign in Portugal.'[1]

Unfortunately, this plan—which Marshal Soult considered truly Machiavellian—this egotistical calculation of his vain and thoughtless mind, was also being made on his own account by every petty military adventurer, according to the measure of his ambition or of his personal covetousness. When an army is no longer fighting for its country's cause, or even for some ideal of glory or grandeur, which to a cer-

[1] Circular of General Ricard, Chief of the Staff of the second corps d'armée, dated April 19, 1809. This curious document was published, we believe, for the first time by M. Thiers.

tain extent may be confounded with notions of justice and civilisation, interested motives obtain the ascendency, demoralisation begins, and with demoralisation the decay of military institutions. Should success fail or even seem to falter in such a contingency, the last spring breaks and signs of latent dissolution appear on all sides. On the present occasion the cause of the evil was by no means recent; it may safely be affirmed, that it altogether lay in the covetous and cruel policy of the man who had undertaken the war in Spain. Was it not some infirmity of mind which made him impose such a task on his soldiers? one that required such abnegation, disinterestedness and sacrifice; whilst he, on his side, only obeyed the inspirations of a monstrous personal egotism, amounting to a furious monomania of pride and of ambition? How could he expect virtues of the kind from troops who saw him yield to such vulgar impulses? Hitherto it had been easy to deceive the public up to a certain point as to the motives of previous wars, by disguising them under the plausible names of liberty, revolution or independence, but no trouble had been taken to deceive any one in this case; for, from first to last, the abominable war in Spain had consisted of nothing but rapacity, trickery, violence, and delirium.

So long as the conquest of that country seemed easy and likely to yield honours or profit, all had become accomplices in it as a matter of necessity, albeit deplorable—for a crime is readily condoned by those who benefit by it. But when affairs took an unfavourable turn, and no hope of recompense for so much suffering could be seen in the distance, nor any prospect discernible save that of an interminable struggle, pitiless reprisals and the faultfinding of an ever-discontented master, to be followed, perhaps, in the end by an obscure death in the depths of some fearful gorge—zeal began to cool, and reflection supervened, bringing in its train doubt, discouragements, and finally murmurs.

The majority of the officers in this army had begun their careers at a period when independence and civilian pride were not altogether without influence, and when one single man did not

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constitute France; and it was possible to believe that in making war they sacrificed themselves for something more than mere caprice. They were already embittered and dissatisfied when their chief began gradually to betray interested motives, instead of offering in his own person an example of that spirit of abnegation which he demanded from them. As a natural consequence they, on their part, readily indulged in every dream most flattering to their wearied spirits, some urging Soult boldly to seize that crown towards which he was stretching his hand timidly though impatiently, others endeavouring to promote a sullen conspiracy in the army aimed against Napoleon himself. A third party, however, headed by Generals Loison and Delaborde, whose first object above all others was to maintain the honour of their flag intact, watched Soult's proceedings sharply, determined, the instant he should attempt to accept the crown to seize him at once and to lead the army back to France. One of the conspirators, named Argenton, a very brave officer, but more daring than sensible, conceived the mad criminal idea of obtaining the co-operation of the English army itself and of its chief, Sir Arthur Wellesley. According to the peculiarly incoherent plans which he laid before the English general at the three successive interviews to which he was admitted at Lisbon and subsequently at Coïmbra, Wellesley was first in an underhand manner to encourage the Portuguese towns to declare in favour of the new monarchy. Soult being once proclaimed king, events should then guide them either to rouse the army to revolt and seize him, or make use of him for the purpose of inducing the other armies occupying the Peninsula to march against Napoleon.[1] Should the project not coincide with Sir Arthur Wellesley's views, Argenton went so far as to suggest a plan of attack by which the French troops could be made prisoners.

It is easy to perceive that the officers who remained faithful to Napoleon and those who conspired against him were alike anxious for a speedy return to France. Of all the sentiments

[1] Despatches of the Duke of Wellington to Marshal Beresford, May 7, 1809; to Viscount Castlereagh, April 27, May 7 and 15.

that pervaded the different divisions of the French army, this was the most deeply rooted, satisfying at once their secret anxieties, the weariness caused by these endless and aimless wars, and the strong evidence of the perils then surrounding us. At all events, dispositions of the kind were too highly favourable to Wellesley's designs to permit of his neglecting to entertain them. He therefore encouraged Argenton warmly, and gave him the passports he demanded, in order to continue his intrigues in France. At the same time taking, with his vigorous common sense, the true measure of the man and the situation, he refused to instigate the Portuguese to offer the crown to Soult, knowing, he said, that such a step on his part would utterly destroy their confidence in him. Moreover, he carefully prevented Argenton from seeing the movements, number, or composition of his troops. Finally, whilst holding himself in readiness to take advantage of the projects of the conspirators, he entered into no engagements with them, and even during the first interview foresaw with remarkable perspicacity that, to all appearance, the plot would never be more than a dream, and ultimately end in smoke. The only result, in his opinion, to be reasonably expected from it, would be that of forcing Soult to evacuate the North of Portugal, which exactly tallied with the end he had himself all along had in view.[1]

It was probably owing to Argenton's culpable intrigues that Soult became aware in time of the attack imminently threatened him by Wellesley. Argenton having confessed the plot to General Lefebvre, whose aide-de-camp he had been, with the two-fold object of warning him of the danger he was exposed to on the left bank of the Douro and of inducing him to join the conspiracy, Lefebvre at once revealed everything to Soult, who instantly had Argenton arrested together with his chief accomplices. It is known that Soult was informed of Wellesley's projects on the 8th of May, and the arrest took place at nine that morning;[2] General Lefebvre's revelation was most probably made the day before, and it is difficult, therefore, not to admit

[1] Despatches to Viscount Castlereagh, April 27, 1809.

[2] To I. Villiers, May 15.

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the connection between these two facts. Thus rudely roused from his dreams of royalty, Soult perceived that one course alone remained open to him,—that of instant flight. But whether it cost him too much to renounce so great a rôle at a moment's notice, and to exchange it for that of a fugitive general, or that he was ignorant of the full extent of the danger, certain it is that he did not act on his determination in time. However, he had the merit of being as lenient to others as to himself, and Argenton, carelessly watched, was able to effect his escape within a few days; no doubt he was recaptured later, tried and shot, but, if so, it was altogether owing to his own imprudence.

Wellesley's plan was most skilfully contrived to surprise our army, despite the strength of its positions. Taking advantage of the presence of Sylveira's insurgent corps at Amarante and Chaves, in our rear, to shut us out from the valley of the Tamega, he decided on sending Beresford with a strong detachment on our left towards Lamego and Villareal, and thus close our entrance to the Douro. Meanwhile, he himself was to attack our front with the main bulk of his forces, by marching from Coïmbra to Oporto by the most direct route. Soult finding himself barred access to these two valleys—the only issues from the Tras os Montes—would be obliged to effect his retreat towards the North by the longest road, that of Braga, and Wellesley proposed to pursue him so rapidly that the passage of the Minho should become hazardous, if not impossible.[1] At all events, Soult would be thrown back into the depths of Galicia, and incapable of affording any co-operation to Victor when Wellesley should turn round against the latter.

On the 8th of May, Beresford was at Vizeu, and two days later at Lamego, where we had no suspicion of his presence. On the same day, the 10th, our small corps of observation which was posted on the left bank of the Douro, under the orders of General Franceschi, in the neighbourhood of Albergaria-Nova, was attacked and wellnigh surrounded by the army commanded by Wellesley himself. But for the delay of the English cavalry,

[1] To Castlereagh, May 18.

whose guides lost their way,—a delay that imposed complete inaction on a detachment sent by the Lake of Ovar to cut off our retreat,—Franceschi would have found himself in a desperate position. However, he succeeded, by dint of hardihood and coolness, in extricating himself and turning back to Oporto,[1] which town our troops reached in the night of the 11th of May.

Marshal Soult had given the preliminary orders necessary for ensuring the retreat of the army by the valley of the Tamega; but, fully confident of the strength of his position at Oporto, he in no wise hastened to evacuate that town. So early as the 2nd of May, before he even thought of such a painful necessity, he had made General Loison retake Amarante, driving away Sylveira's bands from it; and now it was on Amarante that he directed all our detached corps occupying the province of Oporto, especially that of Lorges, recalled from the Lima to the Tamega. Amarante, in fact, was essential to our safety as the key of the valley of the Tamega; but we could not keep it, except by most carefully watching the course of the Douro, from Mezamfrio to Villareal, or rather to the sea; on the other hand, were it but defended, the Douro presented an almost impassable barrier against any attack coming from the south. Protected by this formidable obstacle, our army might retire with ease by Chaves and Bragança to Salamanca, where, though reduced to act on the defensive, it would continue to menace the flanks of the English army, and might even, according to Wellesley's movements, march in support of Ney in Galicia or Victor on the Tagus.

This plan was certainly the best we could adopt in view of the cruel and humiliating necessity of evacuating Portugal. It was also perfectly feasible provided we remembered that we had no longer to do with the tumultuous and undisciplined levies of the insurrection, but with an enemy as clever as he was active and enterprising. It would seem that Soult—cognizant through Argenton's revelations of the dangers that menaced him in his own camp, and, through Franceschi's

[1] Napier, *History of the Peninsular War.*

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retreat, of the march and intentions of the enemy—ought to have redoubled his vigilance and activity. But instead of coming to some prompt decision, such as the circumstances demanded, he determined to pass the 12th of May still at Oporto. So persuaded was he that the passage of the river was impossible, that he issued an order not to answer the fire of the English sharpshooters who lined the opposite bank.[1] And, more extraordinary still,—although informed at six o'clock in the morning of the surprise which Wellesley was meditating, he scarcely took any trouble to verify the fact, beyond making a superficial and insufficient examination.[2]

Wellesley already occupied the suburbs of the left bank, concealing his troops behind the heights of the Sarea, a small hill from the summit of which he surveyed our positions and movements without being himself seen. Perceiving the extraordinary negligence with which we guarded the approaches to the river, he instantly resolved to attempt its passage by main force, notwithstanding the apparently invincible obstacles of a stream three hundred yards wide and the presence of a whole army on the opposite bank. Facing the Sarea hill, on the other side of the Douro, was a building called the Seminary, not yet finished, but forming a very solid enclosure. This point he chose for the landing of his troops. By means of a small boat that had escaped our notice, one of his officers brought back to the left bank three barges which the French had drawn to the right. The first crossed over again with five-and-twenty men, who, rushing boldly through the midst of our troops, took possession of the Seminary unperceived. The two others instantly followed with the same number of soldiers, but as the third touched land our sentinels gave the alarm, and the whole shore instantly resounded with shots and tumultuous sounds. The enclosure of the Seminary, however, had been

[1] Deposition of the Secretary to the Governor of Oporto, May 13, 1809. See the Supplementary Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, vol. vi.

[2] *Mémoires sur les opérations militaires en Galice et en Portugal*, by Lenoble. This witness is the more trustworthy from having written under Soult's guidance.

transformed into a real fortress, and we were there received with a murderous fire. It was then ten o'clock in the morning, a most unlikely and unheard-of hour for a surprise of the kind, if the enemy had not had to deal with French thoughtlessness. Meanwhile the heights of the Sarea had been covered with pieces of artillery, that swept all the approaches to the Seminary. A detachment, sent early that morning to Avintas, where we had taken no precaution to prevent the passage of the river, crossed the Douro there, under the command of Murray, and marched to the support of the defenders of this extempore citadel; while Sherbrooke, in his turn, soon passed the Douro at Villanova. In vain Generals Delaborde, Foy, and Mermet endeavoured to take the enclosure of the Seminary and to drive back the English troops that were filling the streets of Oporto; the two first were severely wounded; our soldiers, though fighting valiantly, were soon compelled to give up all hope of dislodging the enemy from his positions; and the French army evacuated Oporto precipitately, leaving the care of its wounded to the generosity of Wellesley.

Convinced that Amarante was still in General Loison's power, Soult directed the retreat on that town by Baltar and Peñafiel; but on approaching the latter place, about one o'clock in the morning, he received most unexpected and alarming information; namely, that Loison had evacuated Amarante and the enemy had had possession of it since the previous morning. The retreat of the army was thus cut off, and Soult found himself in a position recalling in every particular that of Dupont at Baylen. In the environs of Amarante and extending to Villareal, Beresford's and Sylveira's corps were concentrated. These generals, one of whom had crossed the Douro as the other descended through the valley of the Tamega, were those who had forced Loison to retire on Guimaraëns, and now intercepted the approach to that town and the route to Chaves. If Soult were to attack them and to try to open a passage by main force, it was more than probable that Wellesley would have time to come to their assistance; if, on the contrary, he retrograded in order to

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regain the route by Braga, he must perforce return as far as Oporto, the road to which was occupied by Murray's corps, and then file off with his flank exposed to the fire of the whole English army.

Thus, in front and rear stood a formidable enemy, emboldened by success; on the right the Douro and the Tamega presented insurmountable obstacles, on the left rose the rugged chain of the Sierra de Cathalina. But in this moment of imminent peril, Soult, hitherto so weak and inefficient, regained those qualities which had made him one of Napoleon's most able lieutenants. Learning from a pedlar that there existed an almost impracticable pathway from Peñafiel to Guimaraëns, on the abrupt slopes of the Sierra de Cathalina, he decided, on the instant, to sacrifice his baggage, ammunition, artillery, and even his military chest, and, climbing the sides of the mountain, determined to rejoin at Guimaraëns the divisions of Loison and of Lorges.

Having once arrived there, we were again at liberty to choose between the route to Braga on the left, or that to Bragança by Chaves on the right. It was probable, however, that Wellesley might have preceded us at Braga, and that Chaves had long been in the enemy's power. Soult, consequently, chose an intermediate road, though a very difficult one, which appeared to lead to Orense by Salamonde, Ruivaens, and Montalegre. The Lorge and Loison divisions were, therefore, required to make the same sacrifices as the rest of the army, by destroying their baggage and ammunition, and abandoning their guns. Thus lightened, our troops plunged into the defiles of those mountainous regions,—in fearful weather, with every stream transformed into a torrent,—fighting continually with the insurgent peasantry and the English outposts, and marking each step by the dead they left behind them. The army was twice on the point of being stopped and succumbing to petty obstructions; for, in the crossing of the Cavado and then of the Miserella, its safety was at the mercy of the insurgents who held the bridges, and its escape was due to a kind of miraculous intrepidity. Twice it was saved, contrary to all hope,

by the heroism of Major Dulong. At length, after unspeakable suffering, the troops reached Orense on the 18th of May, 1809, exhausted by fatigue, their clothes in shreds, and without shoes, baggage, ammunition, or artillery. Two months and a half had barely elapsed since they had triumphantly traversed that town on their way to Portugal. They came back beaten, after having lost a kingdom and six thousand men of their effective strength, some abandoned in the hospitals, others fallen in fight or assassinated by ambushes on the road.

Wellesley, however, had attained his object. Although he had not destroyed Soult, as he might at one moment have hoped to do, he had compelled him to evacuate Portugal, had thrown him back on Galicia far away from his proposed line of operation on the flanks of the English army, and in fact, to use his own expression, had placed that corps d'armée 'in such a state of mutilation,' as to make it impossible for it to undertake anything for some time forward. If the English general inflicted no further injury on us during our retreat, the reason is to be found in the just observations contained in one of his letters to Castlereagh, where he says that troops who retained their artillery and equipments could not follow the same roads as those who had thrown away everything for flight. All his operations from the opening of this short and brilliant campaign, so fatal to us, had been conducted alike with extreme hardihood and consummate prudence. The surprise of Oporto, where a French army and one of Bonaparte's cleverest pupils were seen to be defeated and driven from impregnable positions, alone attested true military genius. When, in view of such cautious combinations, in which nothing is ever left to chance, and of orders inspired by so striking a mixture of audacity and calculation, we read the stereotyped lamentations of French writers on 'Wellington's good fortune,'—repeated even by Jomini,—it is impossible to suppress a smile at the simplicity of the tone adopted. Unfortunately for us, the permanence of this good fortune is no less astounding than its brilliancy, for never once, even in the most difficult situations, from Vimiero to Waterloo, does it fail, nor is

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it possible to find such another example in history. But to those who have followed and closely observed this comparatively unknown general, who at the extremity of Europe and so far from the main theatre of war had inflicted on Napoleon two of the most serious checks which he had ever experienced; to those who have noted the many eminent qualities in his work—his sound judgment; his cool and indomitable will; his control over himself and over others; his contempt for charlatanism; his repugnance for every hazardous operation, even though it might add to his personal renown; his strategy—somewhat methodical and expectant, but always suited to the weakness of his resources; the mode in which he converted the defensive into a terrible art; his talent in never accepting battle until he had brought all the chances on his side; his solicitude for his own troops and his scrupulous probity towards his antagonists;—to those who have so watched him it will be evident that while England was weeping for Nelson and for Pitt, a man had been born to her, who would prove a formidable enemy to France.

CHAPTER XV

CAMPAIGN OF TALAVERA. THE WALCHEREN EXPEDITION (*May—September*, 1809).

WHILE Wellesley was wresting Portugal from us a second time, and Soult terminating his somewhat inglorious campaign, in which he displayed more activity than steady solid qualities, all our military operations in Spain were paralysed by the expectant attitude to which Napoleon's plan had condemned our other armies. According to that plan, Marshal Victor and General Lapisse had to wait for Soult's march from Oporto to Lisbon before they could advance, first towards the frontiers of Portugal, and afterwards to Andalusia. But, by the vice inherent in these ill-combined operations, and from the small amount of authority allowed to Joseph's staff, the most essential condition of this plan had not been carried out; there was, moreover, a constant impossibility of supplying defects, and nothing could ever be accomplished in proper time. Our communications, in the first place, were everywhere intercepted; a result which might easily have been foreseen on a field of operations so wide, and so hotly disputed. At Madrid nothing was known of Soult's movements; they were not even aware of Wellesley's landing, still less of his march to Oporto, and it was only on the 14th June that news arrived of the evacuation of that town, which had taken place on the 12th of the previous month. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, Marshal Jourdan, who directed the operations in King Joseph's name, gave orders at an opportune moment to have the movements

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made that had been agreed upon. At the end of March and beginning of April, Victor, after his victory over Cuesta at Medellin, took up his position at Merida, while Lapisse marched from Salamanca on Ciudad Rodrigo. Finding the place, however, in possession of the enemy, and not being able to besiege it, he joined Victor at Merida, and then both halted expecting to hear of Soult's march on Lisbon.

Napoleon's instructions never admitted the possibility of a check, when he had once issued an order. He had not contemplated the contingency of Marshal Soult's being stopped at Oporto; had they then the right to foresee it at Madrid and to modify the Emperor's plans? Not only would he not suffer this, but he had taken precautions that the Court of Madrid should not permit itself such an encroachment on his imperial prerogatives. The commanders of corps corresponded directly with the Minister of War, Clarke, and listened to Marshal Jourdan's wise counsels merely as a matter of form. In view of the increasing anxiety respecting Soult then felt at Madrid, Jourdan gave Victor a formal order to march towards the Portuguese frontier, to make a diversion in his favour and to inquire as to his fate.[1] But Victor preferred to adhere to Napoleon's letter of instructions, which prescribed nothing of the kind, and he remained immovable at Merida until the 25th April, when, without consulting any one, he turned back to Torremocha.

The reason alleged in justification of this resolution, was the reorganization of Cuesta's army, the presence of Portuguese bands at Alcantara, and of insurgent peasantry in his rear, and the necessity of finding provisions for his army in a more plentiful country.[2] Marshal Jourdan, being deeply impressed with the paramount necessity of guarding the high road of the Tagus—which was the route to Madrid and the most indispensable line of communication with Soult, Mortier, or Ney—then desired Victor to establish himself at Alcantara, the bridge of which town was of the utmost importance to us.

[1] Report of Jourdan to the Minister of War, dated June 26, 1809.

[2] Letter of Victor to Marshal Jourdan, April 25, 1809. Correspondence of King Joseph.

But Victor disobeyed him again, and seemed solely preoccupied with his expedition to Andalusia, a project that was quite impracticable for the moment, but which promised him a brilliant opportunity of playing the Commander-in-Chief. The result was that the Portugese had full leisure to blow up the bridge at Alcantara, while Victor had to retreat ingloriously to Talavera, without daring to offer battle to Cuesta, whose army had been reconstituted untler his very eyes.[1]

The same want of union and concert had everywhere produced the same misfortunes, without its being possible, with any justice, to impute blame to those who apparently caused them. Each commander of a corps obeying none but Napoleon,—or it should rather be said, finding himself wellnigh independent owing to the distance,—and occupying himself as was natural, much more with the exigencies of his own position than with those of his colleagues, the maxim 'Every one for himself' soon became the first rule of conduct in a war which pre-eminently demanded a high spirit of abnegation and self-sacrifice. Thus, at the very time when Soult most needed a strong military demonstration on the frontiers of Portugal, Ney—very excusably, it is true, as he was left in total ignorance of that Marshal's movements—was preparing a great expedition, in concert with Kellerman, to the province of the Asturias, and was proceeding north of Galicia at the very time when his presence was so much required in the south.

Ney started for Lugo on the 13th May, the very morrow of the day on which Soult evacuated Oporto. The Marquis de la Romana, who had thrown himself into the Asturias, seeing no hope of defending that province against such an adversary, only studied how to escape him by carefully avoiding any general action. And this he did so well, that Ney, after taking Oviedo, and flattering himself that he had driven Romana back to the sea and would force him to surrender, reached Gijon just in time to see him embark on board an English ship! This skilful party-leader had dispersed his troops by

[1] Jourdan's Report already cited: Victor to Jourdan, May 29, 1809; to King Joseph, June 8, 1809; Jourdan to Victor, June 1.

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degrees, making them cross and recross ours in all directions. A few days later he landed again and rejoined them on the coast of Galicia, and, while we were scouring the Asturias on all sides, searching for an enemy who could not be caught, his bands were already besieging Lugo which Ney and Kellerman had only just quitted.[1]

Galicia therefore was, as it were, abandoned and almost fallen back into the power of the enemy, when Soult reappeared there, at the head of his exhausted troops. He had no difficulty in relieving Lugo, where Ney rejoined him on the 30th May. The latter instantly placed the arsenals of Ferrol and Corunna at Soult's disposal, so that, owing to this succour, the second corps was enabled to repair its losses and recover from its fatigues in an incredibly short time. But the soldiers' reports made known, in all their details, the sad episodes of the short reign at Oporto and of the evacuation of Portugal, and the moral effect was disastrous.

During the whole of this most important and decisive month of May, Napoleon was so completely absorbed by affairs in Germany—calculated no doubt to preoccupy him, considering the check he had received at Essling—that he never gave a single order regarding Spain, except to withdraw from it the troops and officers which he required on the Danube. He first began to show uneasiness on the 3rd June, when news reached him of the English having attacked Soult; but it was not until the 11th that he applied himself seriously to examine the situation of Spain.

He instantly discovered the faults that had been committed, but far from imputing them to his own system, he cast the blame on those who had only executed his orders. They had done wrong in allowing the English to form at Lisbon, wrong in not opening communications with Soult and also with Ney, wrong in not destroying Cuesta, wrong in not driving the insurgents out of the Sierra Morena beyond La Carolina, wrong in acting at all the points of circumference—as if it was not he who had pushed his armies to all the extremities of the Peninsula, to Catalonia, Aragon,

[1] Report of Ney to Joseph, May 21, 1809. Napier. Jomini.

Galicia, and Portugal, after having first annihilated every centre of action! And Jourdan it was whom he made responsible for all these faults, being pleased to forget that he had made it impossible for him to give such orders, that he had forbidden his lieutenants to obey him, and yet that this Marshal had precisely done everything that was required to prevent or repair these misfortunes, by ordering Victor to menace Lisbon and attack Cuesta, and Mortier to advance from Logroño on Valladolid. And to remedy the difficulties of a situation that had become so critical, what expedient did Napoleon propose?—that of forming the three corps under Ney, Soult, and Mortier into one single army which should at once march against the English and drive them into the sea; a very proper idea, no doubt, though rather late in date, and one which he instantly spoiled: for the supreme command of this army was not to be confided to Jourdan, the judicious, modest, experienced chief, whose authority would have been recognised by every one, but to Soult, who had become the most unpopular of marshals, to Soult lowered by his defeat and intrigues in Portugal, to Soult, in short, who had just behaved towards Ney in a manner that no proud man forgives. This was at once to paralyse the central authority of Madrid more than ever, by creating alongside it an authority equal to it if not superior, and at the same time to weaken beforehand all the springs of the new offensive force which it was felt necessary to oppose to Wellesley.[1] Soult was at Zamora in the kingdom of Leon when this order from the Emperor arrived. A misunderstanding of the gravest character, almost amounting to open enmity, had just occurred between him and Ney, at the very moment that the latter was placed under his orders. Before separating at Lugo, where, thanks to Ney's anxious care, the second corps had recovered its equipments and its strength, the two Marshals agreed to make a combined expedition for the purpose of destroying Romana's bands, as well as the English establishments on the coast at Vigo.

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, June 3, 11 and 12, 1809.

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This project once effected, our position in Galicia would be consolidated anew, and Soult could then carry out his favourite plan of redescending along the Portuguese frontier until he found himself on the left wing of Wellesley's army, sufficiently near to follow and observe him. Conformably to this convention, which for greater certainty was reduced to writing, Ney marched on Vigo along the coast of Galicia, while Soult descended the Minho to Monforte, from which he expelled Romana. But instead of pursuing the Spaniard to Orense, and thoroughly defeating him by thrusting him between two fires, Soult remained motionless at Monforte, only sending out some advance guards in a totally different direction, to the valleys of the Sil and the Bibey, and on the road to Zamora. In a letter intercepted by the English,[1] he asserts in justification that his mission ended at Monforte, and that it was his colleague's duty to march on Orense and there crush Romana. But from the moment that Soult could gain so important an advantage at so little cost, was he right in leaving it to another whose forces might not be equal to the task? Ney, on his part, finding the establishments at Vigo far more formidable than he had expected, would not attack them until certain of Soult's co-operation. He contented himself with driving the Anglo-Portuguese outposts as far as Sanpayo, where he encountered a vigorous resistance, and where he suddenly heard of the presence of Romana's bands on his left. Thus threatened with a double attack by far superior forces, he wrote to Soult, but received no answer. He received information which confirmed the move of the second corps to Zamora, so he then decided to return to Compostella, and burning with anger loudly declared that his colleague had laid a snare for him with perfidy of the deepest dye. This deception induced Ney to adopt a resolution of far graver import. He had been sustaining one continued combat ever since he had occupied Galicia, and his corps d'armée was, in consequence, greatly reduced; so much so, that he could now scarcely muster twelve thousand men, when all his available forces were assembled. This was too small

[1] June 25, 1809, published in Wellington's Supplementary Despatches, vol. vi.

a number to struggle successfully against the two armies now close to him in the neighbourhood of Vigo, especially in the probable event of their increase and the certainty he had of being left without support. But this was not all: Ney now knew that Wellesley's army was preparing to cross the frontier of Portugal. What would happen if that general should take it into his head to recommence Moore's campaign, and to avenge his memory by taking a French army prisoner on the very spot at which the British army had been seen in flight?

In such a case, Ney's fate was certain beforehand; for, surrounded by Wellesley, Romana, and Noruña, who commanded at Vigo, no means of escape would be left to him. On the other hand, his presence might be most useful at other points of the Peninsula, where the state of affairs seemed more and more uncertain. Consequently, Ney decided on evacuating Galicia, and his resolve once taken, he put it into execution instantly. Carrying off with him his sick and wounded and all his artillery, the first days of July, 1809, saw him arriving at Astorga.

Thus, when Napoleon's order concentrating the three corps d'armée under the command of Soult, reached Spain, that Marshal was at Zamora, Mortier at Valladolid, and Ney at Astorga, more inclined to send a challenge to his colleague than to serve under his orders. Our other military positions in the Peninsula were purely defensive. Victor had retrograded to Talavera facing the army of Cuesta, observing the valley of the Tagus, and covering the road to Madrid; Sebastiani was at La Mancha, incessantly occupied in driving back into the defiles of the Sierra Morena an army commanded by Venegas, whose real strength was unknown. Saint Cyr and Suchet, who were campaigning with varied success, one in Catalonia, the other in Aragon, without however subduing either province, could have no influence whatever on operations taking place at such a distance. The utmost they could hope was to maintain their respective positions amidst insurgents, who, though always defeated, were never disheartened.

The first effect of the concentration under Soult's command

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was to weaken the true centre of resistance, which lay on the Tagus and in the region situated round Madrid. After the evacuation of Portugal and Soult's retreat to Galicia, Jourdan with much sagacity foresaw that Wellesley would turn round against Victor, who was the less capable of resisting him that he had not been able to beat Cuesta even when alone. He foresaw that the two armies of Wellesley and Cuesta would naturally advance towards the capital, which was already menaced by the army of Venegas. If this danger were not averted, Joseph, who had only Victor's and Sebastiani's corps with the one that acted as his guard to depend on, would be quite incapable of resisting the triple attack.

In this dilemma Jourdan, by great efforts, persuaded Mortier to post himself at the foot of the Guadarrama, at Villacastin, where he would be within reach of King Joseph should circumstances require his aid, and yet not be too far removed from Soult's head quarters at Zamora. But Soult, who had his own plan, and was moreover jealous of his new authority, recalled Mortier from Villacastin to Valladolid, without giving the slightest heed to Joseph's cries of distress. Not satisfied with the command which the Emperor had so inopportunely confided to him, he further strove to draw towards himself all our other military forces in Spain.

Although but slightly informed of Wellesley's projects he meditated a second campaign against Portugal, which was to begin by the sieges of Ciudad-Rodrigo and Almeida, both strong places and capable of long resistance. Such a plan demanded, as a preliminary, the creation of two corps of observation, taken from the armies of Aragon, Catalonia, and La Mancha, from which not a regiment could be withdrawn without serious danger. It implied, moreover, supplies of ammunition, money, and a commissariat, out of all proportion with the resources at Joseph's disposal. The letter in which Soult states his views was written on July 13, 1809. At that date Wellesley was advancing towards Madrid by the valley of the Tagus, and was at Plasencia, at the very spot where Soult had proposed to the King to place one of the two corps of observation.

From the nature and object of his operations, and according to his own calculations, the English general ought to have reached Plasencia much sooner. But he had been retarded by various causes beyond his control, by want of money, a fault to be attributed solely to a ministry that was incapable of comprehending the importance of his plans, by delay in obtaining authority for extending his operations in Spain beyond the provinces adjacent to the Portuguese frontier, and by the necessity of concerting his movements both with General Cuesta and the central junta. Cuesta, below mediocrity as a commander, and of an intractable temper, wished to dictate plans to the conqueror of Oporto that were constantly changing and most frequently were only absurd. Wellesley, unable to dispense with this inconvenient auxiliary, endeavoured with marvellous patience to bring him back to sounder views, though, as a rule, in vain: 'My correspondence with Cuesta,' he writes on this subject, 'has been a very curious one, and proves him as obstinate as any gentleman at the head of any army need be. He would not alter his position even to ensure the safety of his army, because he supposed that this measure might be injurious to himself, notwithstanding that this alteration would have been part of an operation which must have ended in the annihilation of Victor's army.'[1]

Wellesley had been forced to succumb to the indomitable obstinacy of the Spaniard, and to modify his plans, when Victor's retreat on Talavera saved him the trouble of carrying them into effect.[2]

This retreat, in fact, simplified the position of the allied armies, who had now only to advance together up the valley of the Tagus, until they encountered our troops. Wellesley had an interview with Cuesta at the Puerto de Mirabete. It was agreed that they should march together against Victor's army, while Venegas was to come out from the Sierra Morena and

[1] Wellington's despatches to Castlereagh, June 17, 1809.

[2] Wellington's despatches to Col. Bourke, June 9; to Cuesta, June 10; to Castlereagh, June 17.

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menace Madrid by Fuente Duenas. Wellesley knew nothing of the concentration of the three corps d'armée under Soult, he believed that Ney was still in Galicia, and never suspected that nearly forty thousand men were assembled in the neighbourhood of Salamanca. However, he understood the necessity of guarding the passes of the mountain-chain separating old Castile from the valley of the Tagus, and with this view had brought Beresford with a corps of Anglo-Portuguese to Ciudad Rodrigo, and the Duke of Parque to Almeida. Two most important defiles, those of Baños and Pereles remaining open on his left, he entrusted their keeping to detachments of Cuesta's troops, who with great difficulty consented to send them thither. This done, the Anglo-Spanish army marched forward against Victor, intending to reach him and make him fight before the arrival of the reinforcements King Joseph was bringing to him. Wellesley had twenty-two thousand English with him.[1] Cuesta commanded about thirty-eight thousand Spaniards, troops not deficient in bravery, but incapable of manœuvring on a field of battle. In all there were sixty thousand soldiers, about one-third of whom were really efficient, but who, if they could succeed, as was feared, in joining the thirty thousand men under Venegas, would constitute a truly formidable mass in the very centre of the Peninsula.

Wellesley, however, well informed and patient though he was, had no idea as yet of the troubles awaiting him from his allies. He had barely commenced to move when there were signs of a fearful famine amongst his troops. The Spanish Government, who had agreed to provide him with food, stores, and means of transport, furnished none of these, and the country, long since exhausted, afforded no resource. The authorities, however, were profuse in promises, and in consequence he consented to continue his march. On the 20th July he was at Oropesa. On the 23rd he came up with the French on the Alberche, one of the tribu-

[1] The returns of the English army only give 20,997 men, but the officers not being included in this calculation, the real effective strength was 22,000 men.

taries of the Tagus. Victor still stood alone; on his right he was outflanked by Wilson's guerillas, who had advanced as far as Arenas, and it was an excellent moment for attacking him. But here a fresh surprise awaited Wellesley; no entreaty could prevail on Cuesta to engage in the combat. Victor, consequently, had full time to decamp during the night and to extricate himself from his perilous position. No sooner had he disappeared than Cuesta only thought of running after him, without even knowing exactly what direction he had taken. Far from ceasing, the distress of the British troops went on increasing, and Wellesley, exasperated and pushed to extremities by so many disappointments, loudly declared that he would go no further, and would leave his fantastic ally at liberty to act as he pleased.

Happily for him, Cuesta could not advance very far, for Joseph at length joined Victor near Toledo. The King brought with him all the forces he could hurriedly collect, consisting of his guard, a portion of the garrison of Madrid, and the corps of General Sebastiani. His army now amounted to a total of from forty-five to fifty thousand men. It was strong enough to dispute the ground with the Anglo-Spanish army, but not strong enough to feel certain of victory, although every general is supposed to possess that certainty when he holds the means of obtaining it in his hands. Such means Joseph incontestably possessed. By bringing one of Soult's three corps to Madrid, he would have had a decided superiority over Wellesley. Had he brought two, he would have been invincible. And this evidently was Jourdan's plan when he proposed to bring Mortier to Villacastin. Soult, however, had deranged this wise arrangement by sending the latter to Salamanca. Instead, therefore, of making Soult come to Madrid by Avila, and thence march against the enemy with a larger force than was absolutely required for his destruction, they were obliged to adopt another plan, more attractive perhaps, but far less sure, which consisted in throwing Soult with his three corps on the rear of the Anglo-Spanish army at Plasencia, while Joseph attacked it in the front. This plan no doubt offered many great chances of success, always provided

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that the two attacks could be made thoroughly simultaneous. But this condition was most difficult to effect, and even in such a contingency Wellesley might easily shelter himself behind t Tagus, as Napoleon has remarked in his admirable criticism the operations of Talavera.

However this might be, Soult having prejudged the c by the directions he gave to Mortier, Jourdan, in o avoid a collision with him, which would have been fat a moment, deemed it best to agree to his views structed him to *advance as rapidly as possible from S to Plasencia.* This order, dated the 22nd July, was han to Soult at Salamanca on the 24th by General Foy.[1] From Sa manca to Plasencia is a distance of four marches; allowing him five or six days time, Marshal Soult could easily have been a Plasencia with Mortier on the 30th July. Ney, who was still a Astorga, would have required many days more, but forty thousand men were meanwhile sufficient to make Wellesley suspend his offensive movement, and even force him to retrograde before Joseph's army. It was, therefore, of immense importance to Joseph not to attack the allied armies until Soult should arrive at Plasencia, for our greatest chance of success rested on our two movements being simultaneous.

But Joseph was inordinately preoccupied with the preservation of his capital. He had left Madrid suffering from an indescribable panic. All our fellow-countrymen, our officials, and those who had compromised themselves in any way with us had taken refuge with their property in the Retiro, now transformed into a fortress defended by about four thousand soldiers, who had there en-

[1] The question has long been discussed upon whom in reality the responsibility of this order should fall, some attributing it to Jourdan, others to Soult. The correspondence of the two generals seems to us to decide the matter: 'The result of *your letters* is,' says Jourdan, in the very letter in which the order was given, on July 22, 'and from what General Foy has told the King, that you foresaw this move would become necessary, and *that you have prepared yourself for it by uniting your three corps d'armée near Salamanca;* it now only requires to be promptly executed.' In short, the entire responsibility must be traced to him who gave Soult an independent command, namely, to Napoleon.

trenched themselves under orders of General Belliard. If Joseph continued to retrograde towards the Guadarrama, which was his natural line of retreat, and if Venegas, who had come forth from the Sierra Morena, should advance towards the capital in its uncovered condition, there would be an end to this feeble garrison, and to all the families it protected from the resentment of the populace. To these considerations of humanity were added political reasons of no small weight. Joseph had not forgotten the extraordinary moral effect produced by the evacuation of Madrid after Baylen, nor the bitter reproaches which the Emperor addressed to him on that occasion. He was evidently under the influence of these apprehensions, justifiable to a certain extent, but at all times disastrous in war, especially when he had decided on marching against the Anglo-Spanish army.

Cuesta continued to press his pursuit of Victor, contrary to Wellesley's wise advice, when, on the 25th July, his advanced guard came up with our outposts, between Alcabon and Torrijos. The Spaniards were routed in a few moments by the cavalry of Latour-Maubourg and Merlin. This beginning was encouraging for us, and our army, instead of remaining on the defensive, which would have been the most prudent course, returned to the Alberche in pursuit of the Spaniards. The latter fell back upon Talavera, supported in their retreat by English detachments, which Wellesley had most opportunely sent them. On the 27th Cuesta recrossed the Alberche, hotly pursued by our troops, who followed him sword in hand. He then consented more or less willingly to occupy the post assigned to him by Wellesley, on the ground which the latter had himself chosen to give us battle upon.

Our army appeared before Talavera towards the decline of the day on the 27th. We there found the allied troops ranged in a straight line stretching from the Tagus to the chain of mountains which border that river. The enemy's positions thus intercepted the whole right bank, and entirely closed the passage to us. From the town to the chain of mountains rose a series of small hills, difficult of approach, and terminating abruptly in one more rugged than the rest. This

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height, separated from the mountain ridge only by a small valley, and against which the extreme left of the Anglo-Spanish army rested, while its right extended to Talavera and the Tagus, was the key of the whole position. On the small hills—which, as already remarked, were somewhat inaccessible, but which were uncovered and exposed to the fire of our artillery—Wellesley had posted the English troops commanded by Hill, Mackenzie, Sherbrooke, and Campbell. At Talavera itself, behind ditches, buildings, earthworks, and olive woods, the Spanish army was entrenched, in a position suited to its inexperience, and impregnable if only defended. Wellesley, who had shown himself so bold and enterprising in the short campaign in Portugal, where he had commanded his own troops, had become equally prudent and circumspect since he had seen Cuesta's army in the field, by turns rash and pusillanimous, and, in the usual fashion of insurgent levies, absolutely incapable of executing a manœuvre on the field of battle. He was determined not to fight without certainty of success, and in this view he adopted the only plan which could ensure it to him under every contingency,—that of invariably maintaining himself on the defensive.

The day was already far advanced when our troops deployed before Talavera. Victor, however, whose corps d'armée marched first in order, did not, nevertheless, hesitate to begin the action without consulting any one. Long since well acquainted with the ground, he understood, at the first glance, the importance of the height which supported the extreme left of the English. That most essential position did not appear to have attracted Wellesley's notice, for it was almost bare of troops, being occupied only by General Donkin's brigade. It was possible, therefore, to carry it by surprise, and then to turn the English left, which would force them to change front,—always considered a most critical operation in face of the enemy,—and to fight with the river at their backs. The attack on the hill began at dusk. The Ruffin division rushed gallantly to the assault, climbed the height with difficulty, but gained the summit without allowing themselves to be stopped by a brisk volley from the English.

The defenders of the crest, too feeble to resist a bayonet charge, began to give way, when General Hill, who had perceived the danger, rushed from the neighbouring height with a brigade, renewed the combat and forced the assailants in their turn to retire. Badly supported by Victor's other divisions that were in reserve, the Ruffin division was driven back from the top, leaving three hundred killed and wounded on the ground, and postponing the attack until next day.

This check was inauspicious. Was it wise to persist and to risk a general action? It was only the 28th of July; quite impossible, therefore, for Soult to have effected his movement on Plasencia. Although, strictly speaking, he would only require four days to come from Salamanca, all his troops were not there, and he must first collect them at that point, before he could bring them to Plasencia. Even by hastening his evolutions as much as possible he could not arrive before the 30th or 31st July, and then only with two-thirds of his army, for Ney would require at least two or three days more. If we fought on the 28th, therefore, we should deprive ourselves of the immense advantage of a combined attack. It might have been possible to run this risk if an action offered great chances of success, but that was now out of the question since Victor had roused the enemy by his unfortunate attempt. Wellesley, henceforth, knew the weak point of his position, and might be expected to be found on his guard. Such were the very serious considerations which inclined Jourdan in favour of temporising. It was evident that in presence of an army which was very slow in its movements, nay, had more or less a halting gait, our retreat towards the sources of the Alberche could be effected without danger. But Joseph, ever trembling for his capital, which would thus remain uncovered for some days, preferred to renew an attack, persistently instigated by Victor, who was more than ever confident of success, in the hope of effacing the petty humiliation which the enemy had inflicted on him.

On the 28th, at dawn of day, after having startled the English line by a brisk cannonade, Victor again despatched the Ruffin regiments to the assault of the height, supported this time

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by the Villatte division. These brave troops impetuously escaladed the hill under fire from its defenders, and nothing resisted their first onslaught. On reaching the summit, however, they found all the forces of the previous day ranged in battle array on its platform, supported by fresh reserves which Wellesley had sent thither. Nevertheless, they did not shrink from the combat, despite the terrific volleys which decimated their ranks. Soon, however, a general charge of Hill's troops forced our people to give way, and they were driven down into the ravine, after having lost fifteen hundred men in the space of forty minutes.

This second check was far more serious and far less excusable than the former one; first, because the necessity of carrying this height at any cost had been admitted, if we wished to gain the battle; next, because we had the means to take it but did not know how to make use of them. Victor employed only two divisions in this murderous onslaught, whereas he ought to have brought half the army to bear upon it had it been necessary. After these two successive defeats, success became less and less likely, for the approach to the hill which we wished to carry being much easier for the English than for us, and much nearer their positions than ours, they could send as many reinforcements for its defence as we could for its assault and more promptly. The reasons which Jourdan had in the morning alleged for retreat, were stronger now that our soldiers had begun to be discouraged. But Marshal Victor was wounded to the quick in his military pride. He again insisted with so much confidence on continuing the combat, that Joseph once more yielded, this time as much from weakness as conviction, for at that very moment he received a letter from Soult stating that he would not be at Plasencia until between the 3rd and 5th of August.

When this decision was come to, the necessity was acknowledged of making the action general along the whole line, thus to give Victor's soldiers at least the advantage of a diversion, and to engage the attention of the English on several points at once. This plan was all the more natural that their centre, which had not yet been engaged, was not difficult of approach,

and though the position of the Spaniards on their right seemed inaccessible, something unexpected on their part might always be looked for. Only the day before, one portion of their troops had been seized with a panic in the first moment of surprise at the appearance of our cavalry, and had fled as far as Oropesa in fearful disorder. A well-led attack on their positions might, therefore, produce incalculable results, despite the difficulties it presented.

Towards two o'clock in the afternoon, the soldiers of the two armies, who by common consent had suspended the combat and mingled without distrust to quench their thirst at a small stream which separated their positions, returned to their ranks. Sebastiani's corps commenced the action in the centre, under protection of formidable artillery. The German division of Leval, having incautiously moved without support on the point where the English and Spanish positions joined, was forced to retreat with the loss of several guns. But another attack, led by Lapisse and Sebastiani against the divisions of Campbell, Sherbrooke, and Mackenzie, was more successful, and our soldiers began to gain ground in the centre. Meanwhile Victor prepared to assault anew the height which he had promised to carry; 'for,' he had exclaimed, 'if he could not take it, making war must be no longer thought of.' He attacked it simultaneously in front and flank, turning it through the ravine that separated it from the mountain. This turning movement had been executed by the Villatte division. As they crossed the valley however, a brigade of cavalry posted there by Wellesley charged them at full speed. Our soldiers partly avoided the shock, but their advance was stopped, and Victor's manœuvre rendered useless. The 23rd regiment of English light dragoons, carried away by their zeal, rushed past them, pursued their course with incredible fury, and penetrating through our line charged recklessly up to our very rearguard. There, however, charged in its turn by our lancers and Westphalian cavalry, it was sabred, and left half its men on the ground. The combat continued in the centre. Lapisse and Sebastiani, who for a moment had been driven back by the brigade of guards which

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had advanced to support Sherbrooke, renewed a vigorous attack against them and ultimately drove back in disorder the Anglo-German legion which had endeavoured to resist them. The English centre was half broken and gave way before us at that point, when an energetic and well-timed attack by Colonel Donellan, at the head of the 48th regiment, abruptly changed the fortune of the day. The English troops rallying round him regained the victory which was escaping them, and their artillery, better directed than before, so thinned our ranks that our disheartened soldiers had to be led back to their positions.

The battle of Talavera was lost to us, for we had failed in everything we had undertaken; but it had not the consequences of a defeat. The English army was exhausted by the unequal contest it had sustained. It had borne the brunt of the attack alone, the Spaniards having only taken a subsidiary part. Moreover, it was in cruel want of provisions, having been on half-rations since the 22nd of July. It had lost rather more than 6000 men, while the French had lost upwards of 7000; but this was more keenly felt by the English on account of their small numbers. Wellesley therefore did not order a pursuit, which might have compromised his success, and his troops encamped on the ground they had so well defended.

In the night between the 28th and 29th, our army began its retreat, without being disquieted by the enemy. Next day Joseph detached Sebastiani's corps to protect Madrid against Venegas,—a clear proof, as he ventured upon it with impunity after losing a battle, that he might have done so sooner. Venegas had been of no use to the Anglo-Spanish army: he had remained immovable at Daymiel in La Mancha at the time when his assistance was most needed. Incredible as it may seem to any one who has not witnessed the working of party hatred, it is nevertheless true that he was encouraged in his inaction by the junta of Seville, who were afraid that Cuesta might grow too powerful. If he had captured Madrid a few days previously he would have produced one of those great theatrical effects which instantly change the face of affairs, but he had wilfully lost his opportunity, and now that

he was certain to be defeated he marched confidently against the enemy, who however would spare him the trouble of going far to look for him.

Victor remained at a short distance from the Alberche waiting for the expected effect of Soult's apparition on the English rear, which could not now be long delayed. The latter, preceded by Mortier's corps, arrived at Plasencia on the 3rd of August, while Ney followed him by Salamanca. Inexcusable as Joseph had been for the precipitation with which he had attacked the enemy on the 28th, Soult was not less so for the dilatoriness of his movements. Both on this occasion obeyed a secret impulse which betrayed itself in every line of their correspondence, that of playing the principal part in the destruction of the English army. According to the Marshal's plan the King should have limited himself to keeping the English at bay until he came to strike the final blow; according to the King's idea, the Marshal ought to have come only to finish off the defeat, when Joseph had driven the English back on Plasencia. Each had only a secondary part in the conceptions of his colleague, while each stood first in his own plan; a fact in itself sufficient to destroy all our advantages, and the direct consequence of the divided commands and of those ill-defined responsibilities which Napoleon had created in the Peninsula.[1]

Wellesley was still occupied in recruiting his army after the fatigues of Talavera, when, on the 2nd of August, he heard of the presence of Soult's first detachments at Plasencia. Being persuaded that they still consisted merely of the corps that had occupied Portugal, he at once started to meet them with 17,000 English, leaving the Spanish army at Talavera, to whom he entrusted the care of his wounded and

[1] See, on Talavera, the correspondence of King Joseph, July and August, 1809; the reports of Jourdan and of Victor, and the very instructive arguments of the latter with Joseph; Soult's report to Clarke, dated the 13th of August; Cuesta's report, dated from Seville, Sept. 7, 1809; the description by General Desprez; Wellington's despatches, July 29, 1809; Jourdan's intercepted letters to Berthier and Soult, dated July 30, 1809; Napier's History of the Peninsular War; Lord Londonderry; Jomini; Toreno, &c.

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the defence of the passage of the Tagus. On the 3rd of August he was informed at one and the same moment that there were at least two corps at Plasencia and that Joseph was about to rejoin Victor and resume the offensive. Thus menaced with a double attack by forces far superior to his own, and understanding all the danger of his position, he instantly changed his line of retreat. Recrossing the Tagus at Puente de l'Arzobispo, he sent a detachment at full speed to blow up the bridge at Almaraz before our arrival there, and, temporarily protected by the barrier which the river formed against us, he withdrew to Truxillo by the impracticable roads of the Sierra de Guadalupe. Either from indecision or fatigue our army did not pursue him. Cuesta, left to his own inspirations, had forestalled Wellesley's movements, abandoning all the wounded of the English army at Talavera.

Some days later, on August 11th, Sebastiani, who had succeeded in coming up with Venegas, inflicted a most sanguinary defeat on that general at Almonacid, not far from Toledo. But neither this victory, which was more seriously disputed than those we usually gained over the Spaniards, nor Wellesley's precipitate retreat in any way effaced the bad effect of our last campaign. The check we suffered at Talavera was apparently merely an attack repulsed, and the enemy was not able to claim any of the advantages of victory; but the whole aspect of the operations that had accompanied it was most unfavourable to us. This small English army, not larger than one of our corps d'armée, had, under Wellesley's command, forced us to evacuate Portugal and Galicia, where we could not return; it had advanced into the heart of the Peninsula, had thrown such alarm into the capital that at one moment all seemed lost, and, in order to make it withdraw, we were reduced to the necessity of concentrating against it every means at our disposal. What could more aptly prove to Europe the weakness of our rule in Spain?

Napoleon did not deceive himself for an instant, in spite of the triumphant bulletins which Joseph in his vanity sent him about Talavera, and which Marshal Jourdan had the weakness

to countersign. 'Sire,' wrote Joseph on the morrow of the battle, 'the English army was yesterday driven from its positions!' All the rest of his report was in the same pleasing style. The *Gazette de Madrid* published that 'the English left had been *cut up and destroyed* by the Duke of Belluno.'[1] But Napoleon's merciless clear-sightedness saw through these awkward attempts at dissimulation, and in a few lines he pointed out with admirable good sense all the defects of the plan that had been adopted. Why were our forces divided at such a critical moment? Why not have drawn Soult to Avila and Madrid in order to fight with him? Could it not have been foreseen that the English, in consequence of the move on Plasencia, would place themselves in shelter behind the Tagus? Finally, the battle once being decided, how could Victor justify his ill-advised attacks?

Only one answer could be given. Why had he given Soult and Victor power to set the orders and counsels of Jourdan at nought? What touched him, however, more than all the faults that had been committed was his brother's dissimulation. Had we, or had we not, lost guns at Talavera? Wellesley said Yes; Joseph, No. Napoleon never hesitated for one minute in believing Wellesley rather than his brother, and in that particular he was right. He pursued the inquiry until he at last compelled Sénarmont to confess the truth, at least partially. Joseph, moreover, following the invariable system of Napoleon's bulletins, had immeasurably increased the number of the enemy's forces, and reduced his own in like proportion. But Napoleon, who considered the proceeding excellent for himself, declared it detestable in his imitators. 'Truth is due to me!' he indignantly exclaims in a letter where he points out the inaccuracies of what he calls the *carmagnoles* of Jourdan and the dogmatic reports of Sebastiani. But he had instructed them in this as in many other respects, and whom could he blame for the fidelity of his pupils?[2] One fact paints the man better than

[1] See the extract published in the *Moniteur* of August 9, 1809.

[2] See on the subject of these curious recriminations Napoleon's correspondence with Clarke and Joseph, and that of Joseph with Jourdan and

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any other—namely, that at the very time when he was endeavouring to demonstrate to Joseph that a general ought to exaggerate the number of his forces threefold and diminish those of his enemy in the same ratio, 'because it is in the nature of men to believe in the long run that the lesser number ought to be beaten by the greater,' and also in order to inspire the soldier with a feeling of his superiority over the enemy, he adds in the same breath, 'when I vanquished the Austrian army at Eckmühl, I was *one against five*, and yet our soldiers believed that they were at least equal in numbers to the enemy!' —a statement that was an unblushing falsehood; again farther on he says, 'instead of confessing that I had only 100,000 men at Wagram, I take care to persuade every one that I had 220,000 men.'[1] It was impossible to refute himself by a more complete opposition between theory and practice.

Nevertheless, in spite of the faults committed, of our domination being shaken, and our prestige gone, the first result of the campaign was favourable to us in Spain as well as in Austria, and Napoleon, who had skilfully prolonged the negotiations with the latter power, could now make use of this great fact to force her from her last entrenchments. In his communications with the Austrian negotiators there had been no question hitherto save of his desire to restore peace between the two countries, of his disinterestedness, his moderation, his generosity. 'France has never envied Austria her possessions. . . . The generosity which France has shown since the Peace of Presburg, the Emperor is ready to show again,' &c. He insisted only on the urgency of disarming the Landwehr, of reducing the regular line to half its number, and of expelling all French subjects; as for other conditions of peace he designedly left them vague and appeared to care little about them.[2]

Sénarmont during the months of August and September, 1809. However, much as he in secret blamed Joseph for his faults, he in public criticised what he called 'the ignorance, falseness, and folly of the English general.' See the *Moniteur* of Sept. 28, 1809.

[1] To Clarke, October 10.

[2] To Champagny, July 24, 1809.

This tone, so unusual in him after victory, he was quite ready to change on the first good news from Spain, and he impatiently waited to hear of the retreat of the English in order to bear down heavily on the Austrian negotiators. But, from the inconvenience inherent to such distant operations, the news did not reach him until after that of another event which very much diminished its importance, and placed everything again in doubt just when all seemed have been decided. On the 6th of August, 1809, Napoleon received a letter from Clarke, announcing that 200 British sail, of all sizes, had been signalled off the Isle of Walcheren. These 200 sail were but the advance guard of a fleet that consisted of 900 vessels of every class. It was in fact the great maritime expedition of the English which they had at length resolved to bring into action.

The co-operation brought to the coalition by England had been too long delayed to be now of much effect. The English press almost unanimously predicted that it would arrive too late, and the *Moniteur* did not fail to reproduce their predictions.[1] In Germany the die was cast; for Austria, henceforth, could merely look on at any effort made in her favour. In Spain the issue was more doubtful, and the battle of Talavera had been fought there at the very time the British fleet made its appearance off the coast of Holland. The expedition started, not only after the opportune moment when it might have set the whole of Germany in a blaze, but at such a distance from the centre where the great combats were taking place, that it could have no weight except as a sort of episode: even were it crowned with complete success, it could at most improve the position of the vanquished, but not revive their fortunes. The British fleet had so long remained inactive at a time when action was most important, that, owing to the absence of any precise information as to its exact force, every one had ended by considering it nothing more than a kind of scarecrow,—a convoy of transports destined to carry reinforce-

[1] See in particular the *Moniteur* of July 1809.

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ments to the army in Spain; an opinion which Napoleon himself fully shared.[1] Such an hypothesis could not alarm him, for he felt certain of being able to reduce Austria to the last extremity before an expedition of the sort could in any way influence the fate of the war.

The instant he received Clarke's letter he saw both the object of the expedition and the result it might have. The object evidently was the destruction of our squadron and of our establishments at Antwerp. Taking things at the worst, the English undoubtedly could attain this twofold end, but nothing more. He was not the man, however, who would allow himself to be turned away from his principal aim by such a diversion, no matter how vexatious it might be. Consequently he immediately decided 'that this expedition should in no way influence his operations in Austria, and that he would not send one man to Holland.'[2] France could parry the blow by her own resources alone. Independently of the necessity of not relaxing his hold on Austria in any way, there were other motives for this course, which he detected with a wonderfully sure and quick eye. The town of Antwerp, though carelessly guarded at that time, was nevertheless a very strong fortress, and could not be captured except by a rapid and bold attack. If the English attacked it successfully and with all due promptitude, the reinforcements sent from Austria would arrive too late; if, on the contrary, they proceeded to besiege it methodically and slowly, reinforcements from the adjoining departments would suffice to enable the place to resist them for more than six months, and by that time he would doubtless have found some means either of succouring it without weakening his own resources, or of driving the Court of Vienna out of its last entrenchments.

Thus, the too exclusive desire of destroying our maritime forces at a time when they were no longer causing any great danger to England, sensibly lessened the chances of success in a diversion which, had it been better conducted, and above all

[1] Napoleon to Berthier, July 30, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to Clarke, August 7, 1809.

directed at a point nearer the seat of war, might have seriously compromised our position on the borders of the Danube. The greater number of the faults committed by the coalition almost invariably arose from each power seeking its own special advantage rather than the interests common to all, without reflecting that this alone rendered combined effort and joint action impossible, and the blow aimed at our maritime forces seemed the less pressing that Napoleon had apparently given up all intention of fighting at sea, that the English everywhere blockaded our squadrons, and shut them up in the ports, and that they had just caused us a true disaster in the Isle of Aix.

On the 11th of April previous, towards ten o'clock on an intensely dark night, our squadron at Rochefort, which had been blockaded by a fleet under Admiral Gambier for upwards of a month, suddenly found itself attacked—notwithstanding the stockades protecting it—by thirty-five flaming fire-ships, sent floating in for the purpose of destroying our vessels. An indescribable scene of confusion at once occurred, every one trying to save himself amid the masses of moving fire, some letting their ships drift, others sinking the fire-ships by cannonading them. All, however, escaped destruction by miraculous good fortune with but little injury. But on the following day four of our vessels, which had been forced to run close to the shore and had been shipwrecked on the rocks, were cannonaded and burnt, some by the English squadron and others by their own crews who were obliged to abandon them.

This misfortune, which could scarcely be imputed to the commander of the squadron, irritated Napoleon to the highest degree, as everything did which gave a fresh proof of the inefficiency of his navy. But instead of attributing it to the imprudent orders which had concentrated our squadron in a roadstead too easy of access to the enemy, he blamed the officers, who had been the victims rather than the authors of the catastrophe. On every occasion of the kind he should have what he called 'an example'; a favourite expression which proved that the predominating thought in his mind was not to

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act with justice, but to produce at any price a certain intimidating effect, and to find a culprit, even if that culprit had only been unfortunate. He therefore caused an officer to be tried, condemned and executed with merciless rigour, whose whole crime consisted in having failed to carry out the letter of naval rules and regulations. Lafon, the captain of the 'Calcutta,' had behaved with incontestable bravery on that day. Run aground on the reefs of the *Palles*, with his crew incomplete, half his artillery unfit for use, and his vessel riddled by several of the enemy's guns, he nevertheless resisted until four o'clock in the afternoon, having been himself wounded in the fight. But a panic having seized his crew at the moment of their abandoning the ship, he got into the boats with the view of maintaining order there, before all the men had left the vessel. He had thus failed in observing the law which required him to leave last of all. And it was for this infraction of the letter rather than of the spirit of the regulations, subject at most to a disciplinary punishment, that he was now tried. Condemned with regret by his companions in arms, who knew and valued his courage, he paid the penalty of death, like so many others, for the wrongful illusions of a proud spirit which rebelled against the force of things.[1]

The expedition to Antwerp was undertaken with far more powerful means than that of Rochefort, on account of the greatness of its end and aim. It was clear, in fact, that if the English could succeed in capturing that place, and in fortifying themselves there, after having destroyed our fleet, they would possess, thanks to their navy, an offensive post of formidable strength. If, on the other hand, they might consider it wiser to evacuate the place, from any difficulty in maintaining it, the destruction of our vast marine establishments would alone be sufficient compensation for such an armament. On the 29th of July, 1809, their fleet, composed of forty vessels of the line, thirty frigates and from seven to eight hundred transports,

[1] See the documents of the trial published in the *Moniteur* of Oct. 11, 1809, and in the work by his grandson, *Histoire des brûlots de l'Ile d'Aix*, per Jules Lafon, 1867.

gunboats, brigs and corvettes, hove in sight off the Isle of Walcheren. These numberless vessels had on board an army of 40,000 men, 9000 horses and 150 large siege guns, besides an immense quantity of military stores. The naval forces were commanded by Admiral Strachan, the troops by Lord Chatham, elder brother of Pitt, a court official without any military title, who in no way resembled that great man, and had, it was said, sought and obtained this most important command in the hope of its enabling him to recover from some financial difficulties.

We had scarcely any means at the moment of opposing this formidable armament. Owing to the undue extension of our territory, and to those distant wars which took all our disposable military forces to Spain, Austria and Italy, our national frontiers were everywhere unprotected, and our seaboard, from the Channel to the North Sea was almost defenceless. At Flushing, in the Isle of Walcheren itself, some battalions of auxiliaries, composed of Dutch, Irish, and Prussian deserters headed by a small number of French, formed a garrison of about 3000 men, commanded by General Monnet, a veteran of our republican wars. Close by, General Rousseau occupied the fort of Breskens with a few troops, barely sufficient for its defence. A few hundred men in the small forts which protected the passages of the Scheldt at Batz, Lillo and Sansvliet, two or three thousand soldiers at Antwerp itself, but without one single gun on the ramparts, and some feeble reserves along the rest of the coast, consisting of conscripts and national guards employed to watch the remnants of our flotilla rotting at Boulogne, with the squadron of Missiessy posted at the mouth of the Scheldt, but incapable of guarding it,—these were the only obstacles which the English could encounter on their road. There is scarcely any doubt that if, instead of losing precious time off Flushing, they had landed their army at Ostend or Blankenberg and pushed right on to Antwerp by Bruges or Ghent, they would have taken the place by surprise and carried it almost without a blow.[1] The

[1] Jomini and M. Thiers hold this opinion, supported on this point by all the contemporary documents.

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fall of Antwerp would then have necessarily involved the loss of our squadron, which would have thus been cut off from its only chance of retreat.

But the prestige of our arms was still so high, that Chatham did not dare to venture on the territory of the Empire even for a march of five-and-twenty leagues. He executed his surprise with the prudent and methodical slowness of a general who is practising manœuvres, as though it were a point of honour with him to allow us all the leisure essential to our outmanœuvring him. He landed a portion of his troops to the north of the Isle of Walcheren, in order to march them thence to the siege of Flushing. The rest of his army occupied the islands of Beveland, the most southerly one in particular, from whence they had orders to advance at once against the fort of Batz. This fort, situated on the very point where the Scheldt divides into two branches before it reaches the sea, commanded the larger one, and our squadron could not return to Antwerp without passing under its guns. If it had been taken by surprise, —easy from the land side,—the retreat of our vessels to Antwerp would have been rendered impossible. But Admiral Missiessy had no more intention of letting himself be surrounded at the mouths of the Scheldt than he had had of allowing himself to be shut up in the narrow harbour of Flushing. On the 31st of July he re-ascended from the western to the upper Scheldt, leaving the fort of Batz behind him and placing himself under shelter of the forts of Lillo and Liefkenschoeck. Thus, when the English, on the 2nd of August, appeared before Batz, which surrendered on the first summons, our squadron was safely anchored beneath the walls of Antwerp.

While Chatham was erecting formidable batteries on every road round Flushing, incapable though the place was of resisting their fire, especially if the fleet were to make a combined attack, the council entrusted with the government of France during Napoleon's absence, was a prey to the utmost perplexity. Utterly divided in opinion, its members veered from one side to another and in opposite directions, wasting time in endless discussions instead of employing it in action. Some were

influenced by Cambacérès and Clarke, others by Fouché and Decrès; and affairs would have come to a standstill, had not Fouché taken upon himself to act without the knowledge of his colleagues, and to authorise measures to which there were certainly many drawbacks, but which the imminence of the danger imperatively demanded. Fouché, who was then acting in the double capacity of Minister of the Interior and Minister of Police, in consequence of the illness of his colleague Cretet, had the merit of at once perceiving that it was necessary to overawe the enemy by a great national demonstration, and he demanded that, besides sending all the available troops to Belgium, the National Guards of the northern departments should be immediately mobilised.

Fouché instantly despatched the order to the prefects, without waiting to have it ratified by the council. 'Let us prove to Europe,' said he in his circular, 'that although the genius of Napoleon can shed lustre on France, his presence is not necessary to enable us to repulse the enemy.'[1] Clarke and Cambacérès, their minds oppressed with the danger of conspiracies and of revolutionary agitation, pushed distrust of their colleague to the extreme of folly, and the recollection of his past life, of his intrigues, and of his undeniable superiority as a man of action inspired them with an aversion not unmixed with fear. They considered his proposal for raising 30,000 men amongst the National Guards as a mere snare and party manœuvre. In their eyes it was nothing but a means planned by this old member of the Reign of Terror for creating a formidable army for himself in the interior, ready for any contingency at a moment which every one foresaw might occur—namely, the death or defeat of Napoleon. They knew, moreover, how much the Emperor abhorred everything like a display of opinion, or popular agitation, or appeal to the nation. They knew his instinctive and suspicious repugnance to all that exceeded the bounds of the administrative routine,

[1] The *Moniteur* did not publish this circular. It only published the one addressed to the Mayors of Paris. (August 25, 1809.)

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such as he had made it; and they dreaded incurring his anger by measures which might provoke scenes of disorder. Under the influence of these strange apprehensions, which deprived them alike of patriotism, discernment, and even feeling of danger, the wise Cambacérès was heard to exclaim in answer to his colleague's earnest entreaties, 'Monsieur Fouché! I do not want to get myself beheaded,'[1] while Clarke and Fouché soon treated each other reciprocally as the 'Jacobin' and 'the traitor sold to the English.'[2] Hence Fouché's vehement expostulations had no influence whatever upon his colleagues. They would adopt none but the usual regular methods, making the small organized forces, which consisted of gendarmerie, provisional battalions and artillery depôts, proceed from the provinces of the Centre and the North to Belgium. These troops, united to the five or six thousand men remaining with King Louis of Holland, ought to suffice, according to their idea, for the defence of Antwerp; and, should more energetic and decided measures become necessary, they intended to await the Emperor's instructions on that head.

In reality, neither Fouché nor Cambacérès were altogether mistaken as to Napoleon's presumed dispositions. They were equally right and wrong, for they each viewed his character from a different side. The one thought of the man of action; the other of the official personage, the pompous creator of an immovable order of things, the declared enemy of every idea not emanating from himself. Fouché saw justly that, according to his master's opinion as well as his own, action was the one essential. But he judged wrongly in imagining that he would be pardoned for a service rendered with so bold a hand and so much independence of judgment. Cambacérès had guessed rightly that once the danger were past, all these patriotic demonstrations would become supremely troublesome and odious. Fouché might have the first impulse produced by clear evidence of peril in his favour, but Cambacérès could calculate with more certainty on the inevitable reaction and the permanent ten-

[1] Thibaudeau.

[2] *Mémoires* of Philippe de Ségur.

dencies of a character which he knew better and feared more than any one else.

The Minister of Police, no doubt, obtained a complete triumph over his colleagues, when the Emperor had all the despatches under his eyes that informed him successively of the arrival of the English fleet off the Isle of Walcheren and of the landing of Chatham's army. The very instant he received Clarke's first message, on the 6th August, and even before he had heard anything of Fouché's arrangements, he saw the necessity of intimidating the English by a national movement in default of a great display of military force, and he desired the Minister of War 'to draw up circulars such as would excite the nation, and to raise 30,000 men of the National Guard in the Northern departments.'[1] At the same time he commanded the most urgent measures to be taken for stopping the enemy's progress, and the plan to be adopted in this campaign was an essentially defensive one. They were to bring the garrison of Flushing up to its full complement, especially in artillery and officers, to order General Monnet to cut the dykes and flood the surrounding country, to concentrate the élite of the National Guards at Ghent, commanded by General Rampon, so as to enable them to reinforce the garrison in the Isle of Cadzand, to call all the gendarmerie that could be collected by General Moncey to Lille, and all the disposable troops of the King of Holland to Bergop-Zoom, in order to be able to march them to Antwerp at the first signal. As to the fleet, it was to take refuge at Antwerp itself. No risk, however, should be run with troops of such inferior quality. Flushing could hold out for two months, and by that time the English army would perish from fever and the inundations.[2]

When he learnt the opposition which Fouché's proposals had met with from Cambacérès and Clarke, his natural impatience changed to anger, and he broke forth in invectives: 'Did they wish, then, to allow the English to come and surprise them in their beds? It was not 30,000 but 60,000 National

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, August 6, 1809.

[2] Napoleon to Clarke, August 7, 8, and 9.

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Guards that should have been raised. The attitude they had adopted on that occasion was disgraceful and shameful, and Fouché alone had understood what ought to be done!'[1]

The council had been equally undecided and divided in opinion as to the commander-in-chief to be appointed to this extempore army: Fouché proposed Bernadotte; Cambacérès, the King of Holland. The question was well worth examining. In fact, the more feeble this army, the more necessary it was to supply its deficiency in experience and in strength by a good commander.

Bernadotte undeniably had the best claims for this post, but his presence in Paris at that moment was alone caused by his being in disgrace, and no one was ignorant of the hatred Napoleon bore him, especially since the period of Moreau's trial. At that very moment the Emperor had almost publicly inflicted the deepest injury upon him. After the battle of Wagram, Bernadotte, who was hurt at no justice having been done to the Saxon troops under his command, unwisely published an order of the day in which he complimented the soldiers on the courage and firmness they had displayed during the days of the 5th and 6th of July.

The Emperor, the more deeply irritated by this indirect reproach because it was partly merited, answered it by another order of the day, addressed, it is true, only to the commanders of corps, but promptly and maliciously made public, and couched in language most insulting to the marshal. 'Bernadotte,' it said, 'has taken glory to himself which belongs to others. His order of the day tended to give false pretensions to troops by no means first-rate. It was contrary to truth, policy, and national honour.'[2]

On a thousand other occasions he had taken pains to depreciate Bernadotte's character and talents. But although he felt real aversion to this marshal for his independence, his ambition,

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, August 10; to Clarke, August 10, 11, 13, 1809.

[2] Order of the day of August 5, 1809. Schönbrunn.

and high spirit, he nevertheless at heart really esteemed his energy and military qualities. Proof of this occurred on the very day after he wrote this insulting order, without foreseeing that he would so soon want the man he was thus disgracing; for, on the 11th of August, under the stern pressure of danger, he pointed him out to Clarke as the one whom he ought to put at the head of this movement, rather than Moncey, Bessières, or Kellermann, although also unemployed. 'If Flushing be taken,' he wrote shortly afterwards to Bernadotte himself, 'I can only attribute it to want of head on the part of the commandant. In that respect I consider Antwerp impregnable. I confide in your bravery, skill, and experience.' But Bernadotte was too clever to be deceived in this manner; he knew that such compliments had but one meaning—namely, that he was wanted. Meanwhile Napoleon blamed Cambacérès severely for having thought of giving the command to King Louis, under the pretext of his being the *Grand Connétable* of the Empire. Is it not exactly, said he, as if one wished to give Murat command of the fleet under the pretext of his being an admiral? But, in return, might not the Arch-chancellor have replied, that if Louis could have been suddenly made king in a country of which he knew nothing, why not with equal justice suddenly make him a general?

The measures ordered by the Emperor were executed with all the promptitude demanded by the circumstances. In the first days of August King Louis went from Aix la Chapelle to Berg-op-Zoom, where he had concentrated 8,000 Dutch[1], whom he then distributed on all the points that were most menaced. Rampon started for the Isle of Cadzand with his national guards, to reinforce General Rousseau. The provisional battalions of conscripts, the depôts, and mounted gensdarmes were sent in haste to Antwerp, which soon possessed a respectable garrison. Bernadotte himself arrived there on the 15th of August, and displayed much zeal and activity in forming and exercising all these inexperienced troops. The national guards, it is true, called so unexpectedly to a share in renown which they did

[1] Documents on Holland, published by King Louis.

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not in any way desire, showed as a rule great languor and coldness.[1] Nor could this be surprising. Where was the benefit of their having created a strong government and submitted to the despotism of the Empire, if they were thus to see themselves exposed to surprises and panics such as they had scarcely known during the Revolution? What was the advantage of so colossal a power, if it did not know how to guarantee them security? What glory was there in occupying the capitals of foreign countries, when their own was left uncovered and exposed to the insults of the enemy? Where was the use, in short, of maintaining an army of 600,000 men at such enormous expense, if, at the same time, they were obliged to have recourse to levies *en masse*, to requisitions, and to all the primitive expedients of a nation possessing no organized defence?

These facts were a cutting commentary on the Imperial system, and the lesson was intelligible to every one. There is no doubt that reflections of the kind had a great share in the repugnance shown by these men to quitting their homes, which they considered they had acquired the right to inhabit peacefully. But such repugnance was better founded than they imagined. No sooner had Napoleon begun to foresee the thorough failure of the English against Antwerp, than this levy, which before long was to number 80,000 men,—the last reserve of France, now so completely exhausted,—became nothing more in his eyes than an additional army for the war against Austria; an army which, by his own admission, he could not otherwise have raised, and which he intended, according to circumstances, should serve him either in influencing his negotiations with the Court of Vienna, or, if need be, in marching against that power.[2]

Everything Napoleon had anticipated was, in fact, about to be confirmed by events, except in the matter of Flushing. That place, which he supposed could hold out for two months at

[1] Philippe de Ségur, *Mémoires*. This writer is the more trustworthy on this point that he speaks here *de visu*, having had command of the cavalry in this levy.

[2] Napoleon to Champagny, August 19, 1809.

least, was in reality incapable of resisting the combined attacks of the army and the English fleet. The inundation could only retard its fall by a few days, and General Monnet, who defended it as best he could, gave the order to cut the dykes. But whether the level of the ground had been raised, or that a wrong calculation as to the height of the waters had been made, certain it is, that the opening produced but little effect and in no way hindered the English from erecting their batteries on the roads surrounding Flushing. On the 12th of August, after a summons to surrender had been sent to the town, 1200 pieces of artillery simultaneously opened fire by land and sea, and riddled Flushing with shot and shell. At the end of a three days' terrific bombardment, every house in the place being on fire or in ruins, our batteries dismounted, and one third of our garrison no longer fit to bear arms, the population in despair vehemently demanded a capitulation, then become inevitable, and Monnet, who had bravely done his duty, surrendered the place just as an assault was to have been made which he was no longer capable of repulsing (August 15, 1809).[1]

The taking of Flushing was the only advantage England gained by this gigantic expedition, the largest that had ever left her shores. Nearly 10,000 of her soldiers were suffering from marsh fever, and this number was daily increasing, while they also learned that Antwerp was not only now prepared against surprise, but capable of sustaining a regular siege. Moreover, as invariably occurs in so disastrous an expedition, disunion had taken place amongst its commanders. Admiral Strachan and Lord Chatham threw the responsibility upon each other of the check which seemed likely to follow so ill-begun an enterprise, and they could not agree as to the subsequent operations. On the 26th of August the combined forces had not advanced beyond Batz, and the obstacles seemed to be

[1] According to the testimony even of Chatham and of Admiral Strachan, Flushing was on fire on the evening of August 14, and the town 'presented a fearful picture of destruction!' See Strachan's report dated August 17, 1809, and Chatham's dated the 11th, Annual Register for the year 1809.

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increasing in proportion to the diminution of their numbers. A council of war was held, which decided on retreat, subject to the approbation of the British Cabinet, a resolution the latter did not hesitate to confirm, lest, in addition to the loss of the campaign, they might also have to deplore that of the whole army. Hence the expedition at once commenced its retreat, and before long the English troops evacuated the Belgian territory and even the Isle of Walcheren, which had become the final resting-place of some of their best soldiers.

Napoleon at first refused to believe in the surrender of Flushing, which he had so often declared to be 'impregnable.' When he could no longer doubt the truth, he unhesitatingly attributed it to the 'cowardice and treachery' of General Monnet. Before he even received any information as to the conduct of this officer, he ordered Clarke to have articles on his cowardice published in the papers, also stating the terrible punishment reserved for commandants of fortresses who incurred such dishonour.[1] The violence of the tone adopted has naturally thrown suspicion on the sentence pronounced by the commission of inquiry which Napoleon instituted on this subject. Monnet, in fact, was tried and condemned to death in his absence by a military commission, which was more careful to cast the misfortune that had befallen our arms on the victim that was pointed out to them, than to throw any blame on the detestable policy which was its principal cause.[2]

From the instant that Napoleon felt the danger was becoming less pressing, and that the English by their dilatoriness were sure to fail in their object, he began to return, as Cambacérès had foreseen, to his real character. The instinctive distrust peculiar to the despot, which made him above all

[1] Napoleon to Clarke, September 2, 1809.

[2] The reports of the commanders of the English expedition are at variance in many essential points with the conclusion drawn by the commission of inquiry, notably as to the number of the garrison. Compare the *Moniteur* of the 8th December, 1809, with the State Papers.

else a lover of silence, of immobility and of passive obedience, regained its ascendancy over his judgment as a man of action. He considered that after all they had made too much noise about a trifle, that Fouché had gone too far, and that, as he expressed it, 'so much bustle and effervescence was quite unnecessary.'[1] What was the use of multiplying levies and spreading them along the departments of the coast? Why send the national guards travelling post-haste? Did it not needlessly alarm the people? Before long this impatience changed to ill-humour, and his ill-humour into distrust both against Fouché and Bernadotte, and when he had no further cause to doubt of the retreat of the English, he did not hesitate to withdraw the command from an auxiliary whom he no longer wanted. A month had scarcely elapsed since he had confided it to him, but he now reproached Bernadotte for his correspondence with 'the intriguers of Paris,' and for a fresh order of the day in which the Marshal had boasted that he had not had more than 15,000 men at Antwerp, to hold the place against the English.[2]

Whether these reproaches were very sincere is a point that can be settled by referring to Napoleon's own testimony. On the 8th of October following he wrote to Bessières, 'I have no reason to be discontented with the Prince of Ponte Corvo, but I have not judged it wise to leave a man of such unsteady opinions at the head of such large forces.' Bernadotte, therefore, first received an order to travel, then the offer of a command in Catalonia, which he refused, and finally, in consequence of an explanation with Napoleon in which vehement language was used, he was appointed to the government of Rome with a salary of two million francs; a result which proves clearly enough that it was safer for him to make himself feared than to perform services for the Emperor. This appointment, however, was almost immediately withdrawn from him. As to Fouché, from the instant that the English appeared to be rendered powerless, he was nothing but a busy-body

[1] Napoleon to Cambacérès, September 1, 1809.

[2] Napoleon to Clarke, September 11, 1809.

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and an agitator who wished 'to set France on fire, and created a feeling of uncertainty by his eternal levies. . . . . What could he possibly want to do with them?'[1] His zeal very much resembled treason, and this suspicious and dangerous servant would before long receive his reward.

[1] Napoleon to Fouché, September 26, 1809.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PEACE OF VIENNA. THE DIVORCE AND AUSTRIAN MARRIAGE. ANNEXATION OF THE PAPAL STATES TO THE EMPIRE. NAPOLEON'S PROJECTS RESPECTING THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. (*July* 1809—*May* 1810.)

THE negotiations commenced at Altenburg between Napoleon and the Emperor Francis, after the armistice of Znaïm, had remained almost stationary, while the issue of events in Spain and Belgium was still uncertain. Every one, in fact, felt that these three contests, although fought out at such great distances, formed in reality but one combined whole, and that if a battle were lost on the Tagus or the Scheldt all the advantages gained on the Danube would be seriously compromised. Never was there a truer illustration of the celebrated saying that, 'Although diplomatists draw up treaties, it is generals who make them.'[1] Up to the moment when the news arrived of the decided check given to Wellington's campaign in the valley of the Tagus and the failure of the English in their attempt on Antwerp, the conferences of Altenburg were nothing but a kind of diplomatic skirmish in which both sides were fencing rather to gain time than to ascertain the true intentions of their adversary. Napoleon laid down the principle of the *uti possidetis*, which consisted in considering all the territory occupied by our troops, with its nine million inhabitants, as an already acquired possession, destined to serve in the negotiations as a basis of

[1] Speech of M. Thiers on the negotiations with Prussia, 1871.

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exchange for such portions of the Imperial domain as Austria might prefer to give up. Such pretensions were inadmissible, and the Austrian negotiators answered by the principle of the integrity of the Empire and the offer of a purely pecuniary indemnity, although they well knew this was a proposal that had no chance of acceptance by a conqueror so exacting as Napoleon.[1]

In reality, the Emperor had very promptly made up his mind what concessions he would demand from Austria, and it is not difficult to disentangle them from the diplomatic feints beneath which he at first disguised them. On his Italian frontier he wished for a portion of territory which would enable him to establish communications by land between Venetia and his possessions in Dalmatia, that is to say, Carinthia, Carniola, and that part of Croatia which borders the Adriatic as far as Dalmatia; on the Inn, to advance the Bavarian frontier as close as possible to Vienna; while in Galicia, under pretext of rounding off and strengthening the kingdom of Saxony, which was his handiwork, he wanted to increase the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, that served as a keystone for the reconstruction of Poland. But to gain this last point he had to deceive Russia, whose suspicions were justly aroused, and towards whom he was bound by the most formal engagements. There was the greatest danger in disowning these engagements, for this was not a question to be settled merely with the Emperor Alexander, personally favourable to the Poles, but with the whole Russian nation, whom the very name alone of Poland lashed into fury. If the Czar were to act in opposition to a national hatred of so powerful a nature, he would certainly endanger his crown, nay even his life. Most characteristic it truly was, that so long as the war with Russia had lasted, Napoleon refused to do anything whatever for Poland, although he could then have attempted it with impunity, if not advantage. It was since he had formally promised not to think of it that the temptation had taken possession of his mind, and that, underhand, he

[1] See Napoleon's letters to M. de Champagny, from July 24 to August 19, 1809.

encouraged the Polish patriots. This was known at St. Petersburg, where no opportunity was omitted of cautioning him against such designs, and warning him that they would put an end to the alliance. It was the constant subject of discourse between the Czar and Caulaincourt, our ambassador; and particularly when the conferences at Altenburg were commencing, Alexander renewed his caution in the most unequivocal language. He had been invited to send a representative to the negotiations, but foreseeing that this might lead to his being made to accept responsibility for acts he could not approve of, he preferred leaving Napoleon to decide in the common interests of the two powers. But he again advised him in the most especial manner not to touch the Polish question. 'My interests are in your Majesty's hands,' he wrote to him on the 21st August, 1809. 'I like to place entire confidence in your friendship for me. You can give me a certain proof of it by remembering what I so often repeated to you at Tilsit and at Erfurt with regard to the affairs of what was formerly Poland, and which I have since desired your ambassador to repeat to you.'

The Court of Austria was perfectly aware that this was dangerous ground for us; and for this reason they tried in every way to entice Napoleon on to it. His keen penetrating eye saw the snare clearly, but could not, nevertheless, resist yielding to the attraction of the forbidden fruit. He foresaw that Austria would use the grievance at St. Petersburg against him, in order to impede the negotiations. The dangerous names of Galicia and Poland therefore should not be pronounced by him, so long as he could postpone it; then, at the last moment, he would abruptly impose his will upon the repugnance of Russia, by an 'accomplished fact,' alleging as a pretext the moral impossibility of abandoning to the vengeance of the Austrians those Poles who had exposed themselves for our cause. Up to that period, it would be necessary to deceive Russia, and to prevent his being prematurely accused of having designs himself upon Galicia. With this view he insisted on a detailed protocol of the conference being kept, a proposal

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which to the highest degree excited the discontent of Metternich and Nugent, the two negotiators on whom the painful task had devolved of disputing with him the shreds of the Austrian monarchy. It is difficult to understand how it came to pass that the anxiety of the Court of Vienna to push him into this dangerous path, did not make Napoleon retire before concluding a transaction which could not fail to end fatally by war with Russia. But it is undeniable that he acted knowingly—forewarned and thoroughly well informed on the subject. 'Tell Caulaincourt distinctly,' he wrote to Champagny on the 24th August, 'that he must request M. Romanzoff not to let himself be misled by any insinuations from Austria, and to assure him that the word Galicia has not been pronounced, *that we do not wish to pronounce it, although it is clear that the Austrians are endeavouring to find some way of commencing proceedings by that question.*'[1]

Yet he did wish it, in spite of these reassuring protests. Not being able, however, to avow his projects without seriously compromising the issue of the negotiations, he took a circuitous route. The Austrian negotiators being, moreover, in dismay and obstinately silent, he had little by little to relent in his first demands. He gave them to understand that if Austria consented to sacrifices equivalent to those she had made at the peace of Presburg, he, on his side, would willingly accept a medium course between such sacrifices and the basis of the *uti possidetis*, that is to say, the cession of four or five million of inhabitants, instead of the nine millions he had at first demanded. He then induced them to admit the principle that this cession might take place, first on the Italian frontier and afterwards in Upper Austria. Arrived at that point, but not yet wishing to speak of Galicia, although proposing to increase Saxony, he demanded the annexation of three Bohemian districts to the latter kingdom, convinced that the Emperor Francis would, of his own accord, offer to substitute for them a portion of Galicia, which, being a late acquisition he could not value so much as one of the older possessions of the monarchy. In

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, August 24, 1809.

exchange for these various cessions, he would, he said, restore Vienna, with the districts of Brunn and Znaïm, besides all Lower Austria and Styria.[1] This was a clear announcement that he had other claims still to put forward; for our troops and those of our ally, Russia, occupied not only all those provinces, but nearly half of Galicia, which as yet there had been no question of restoring. On this point Champagny was to declare that 'those countries would become the subject of special discussion, and form a separate *uti possidetis*.'

The Court of Austria, crushed down though it was by the harsh conditions imposed upon it by its conqueror, must have felt the keenest satisfaction when it perceived that at length, after so much hesitation, he was furtively stretching out his hand towards the prey he so ardently coveted. The Emperor Francis suddenly became more communicative than he had ever been. He sent his aide-de-camp, M. de Bubna, to Napoleon, pretending to cast the blame of the dilatoriness of the negotiations at Altenburg on Metternich's love of form, and to say that they could come to an understanding much more quickly without the help of the diplomatists. Napoleon received Bubna with a courtesy not free from familiarity, and took the trouble to display all those feline graces to which—thanks to his flatterers—he now attributed a sort of power of fascination; in short, during the course of the interview, he went so far as to pull his moustache, which was looked upon as a most especial favour. He pretended to open his mind to him completely, and to keep no secrets from him. He only asked to live at peace with Austria, in no way wished to dismember it, but was forced to take precautions in order to guard against the weakness of the Emperor Francis, who had become the instrument of England, and who 'was always of the opinion of the last person that spoke to him.' If Austria had had a sovereign whom he could have trusted, as for instance the Grand Duke of Würzburg, the former Grand Duke of Tuscany and brother of the present Emperor, Napoleon declared that he would have been

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, letter of August 15 to September 4.

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quite ready to restore all the territory he now occupied. Bubna, however, instantly replying that if this were the case the Emperor would have no hesitation in abdicating, Napoleon affected not to believe him. He saw clearly, he said, that they wanted to force him to recommence the war, and to shed more blood, but in that event, he would not retire until he had separated the three crowns. If they desired peace, they must prove it by resigning themselves to make all indispensable concessions. He insisted on the necessity of obtaining guarantees from a sovereign from whom he had experienced ingratitude, and whose interests, moreover, were so much opposed to his own. 'Your master and I,' said he, with that flippancy which he mistook for military candour, 'are like two bulls who wish to mate with Germany and Italy.'[1] He also impatiently repulsed Bubna's demand regarding the restitution of the Tyrol to the house of Austria, but he sensibly diminished his pretensions by declaring himself ready to accept a sacrifice like that of Presburg, in other words by not exacting more than about 3,500,000 inhabitants.

After his interview with Bubna, Napoleon determined to take the decisive step. The final check of the Antwerp expedition and Wellington's retreat to Portugal were then known to be beyond doubt. Austria had no further succour to expect from any one; she ought therefore to resign herself to finish matters, and the personal advances made by the Emperor Francis to Napoleon seemed to indicate a disposition of the kind. On the other hand, our successes, although incontestable, were not of the same overwhelming character as at other previous periods. In Austria, a more than doubtful battle at Essling, and another hotly disputed at Wagram; in Spain, a battle lost at Talavera; in Holland, a blow parried, owing more to the incapacity of our adversary than to any merit of ours,—all these were not advantages which allowed us to make much abuse of victory. It was essential, therefore, to diminish our pretensions to the lowest, and to dictate peace as quickly as possible. Napoleon, it is true, seemed to understand the necessity of concluding it promptly, but less with a view to hasten peace than to prevent

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, September 10, 1809.

Russia interfering in a treaty which was to be made partly against her. He therefore at last determined to unmask his real views, and on the 15th of September wrote to M. de Champagny, 'to press forward the negotiations as much as he could,' and to inform the Austrian diplomatists that, 'in order to put an end quickly to the evils of war which afflicted the people and *especially that good Austrian nation*,' he was ready to conclude it on the basis of a cession of population,—of 1,600,000 souls on the frontiers of the Inn and in Italy, and of 2,000,000 in Galicia, '*to be divided between Saxony and Russia*.'[1]

This pretended *division* was in his view merely intended to pacify the Emperor Alexander, for he reserved for him but one-fifth of the territory which he demanded in Galicia. Under this guise that fatal thought which lurked beneath all his others, and was so pregnant with present and future complications, first saw the light of day. The aggrandisement of the Duchy of Warsaw, or of Poland rather, of which there had never been a question hitherto, in itself exceeded all he had claimed on the score of Italy and Bavaria. Such a betrayal, tardy though it was, of his long-concealed desire, at once disclosed the ulterior plans he had in view, and the cause of the dissimulation which he had seen fit to practise at the beginning. The Court of Austria took care not to repel a pretension which in reality was very advantageous to it, and made but trifling objections to our demands on the subject of Galicia. It would even, if necessary, have ceded the entire province to us, but vehemently opposed giving us any of the other disputed points on Austrian territory. Now that Napoleon had betrayed himself, it was as much Austria's interest to prolong the discussion as his to shorten it. This calculation by the Austrians, however, did not escape the observation of their sharp-sighted adversary, but it irritated him keenly. With all his genius, Napoleon was too impatient and too imperious to be a good diplomatist. In every negotiation which he conducted personally, although he prepared with consummate art the snares into which he intended his adversaries should fall,

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, September 15, 1809.

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he almost invariably allowed them to be seen through before the proper time, thus losing all the benefit of his stratagems, and being obliged as a last resource to show the point of the sword. The latter argument, no doubt, was all-powerful, but it added humiliation to defeat; and excited resentment amongst the vanquished that was all the deeper from the first appeal having been made to principles of compromise and equity. In his vexation at having taken a false step, he heaped the most insulting abuse on the Emperor and his counsellors. When writing to Champagny he said: 'I don't know how they can make that prince *speak such nonsense;* the gentlemen of the Court of Dotis can have no idea of geography . . . we must let them talk twaddle . . . . The Emperor does not know what he is saying.'[1]

The aim of all this twaddle was to deprive him of some thousands of subjects, and to gain more time if possible, which was the cleverest plan Austria could adopt. But Napoleon was not the man to let any one take advantage of the false position in which he had placed himself. Diplomacy had become worthless from the moment that he decided on imposing his will at any cost upon his adversary. He therefore abruptly took the negotiations into his own hands, and treated directly with Bubna and Prince John Lichtenstein, the same whom he had so well known how to flatter, caress, and cajole after the battle of Austerlitz. This was equivalent to saying that affairs were to be treated in a military fashion, and that the conferences of Altenburg were henceforward useless. He ostensibly placed his army in strategical positions, held reviews, and inspected the principal posts, and then, having taken these precautions, signified his ultimatum to the two generals. On the Italian frontier he would be satisfied with Carniola; in Carinthia, with the district of Villach; in Croatia, the right bank of the Save as far as Bosnia, and on the frontier of Bavaria he would give back Linz and keep Salzburg. In all, this amounted to 1,500,000 souls, instead of 1,600,000. In Galicia he would be content with a population of somewhat more than 2,000,000, but also de-

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, September 21 and 22, 1809.

manded the reduction of the Austrian army by 150,000 men, the exclusion of all foreigners serving in Austria, and a war contribution of 100,000,000. (Sept. 30.)

The menacing demonstrations by which he accompanied these demands produced their effect on the Court of Dotis, and all dispute with him ceased except as to the amount of the war contribution. Napoleon, however, was obstinate, and his determination not to lower the sum he had originally named seemed likely to prolong the discussion indefinitely, when an incident occurred that was well calculated to affect him strongly and to make him feel the necessity of bringing the negotiations to a conclusion. On the 12th of October, 1809, while he was passing his troops in review at Schönbrunn, a young man rushed out from the crowd and tried to approach him. Although instantly driven away, he a second time attempted to get near the Emperor, but his persistence having attracted the attention of the staff, Rapp and Berthier had him arrested and searched, when it was discovered that he carried a long and very sharp knife concealed under his coat. He was a youth of seventeen, almost a child, with a melancholy but mild cast of countenance, son of a poor pastor at Naumburg, and called himself Frederick Staabs. When questioned by the Emperor in presence of Corvisart, he answered with a calmness and assurance that told of most inflexible resolve. Nor could Corvisart detect any irregularity in his pulse. Without the slightest attempt at boasting he declared that he had determined to kill Napoleon, in order to deliver Germany from its oppressor, that he had no confidants or accomplices, but showed neither regret nor repentance. 'I have not been able to see any trace in him either of religious or political fanaticism,' wrote Napoleon to Fouché, when giving him an account of the event on the very day it occurred. It was, therefore, patriotism alone which had moved him to the deed.

This first indication of the implacable passions of 1813 made but a passing impression on Napoleon, and the lesson which such an act of fanaticism contained was lost upon him. It suggested to him no other idea than the necessity of quitting as quickly as possible a residence which had become unwholesome.

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He saw in it no symptom of the hatred of the nation, nothing but the act of an over-excited individual, and he would willingly have made Staabs pass for a lunatic, had not the lucidity of his mind been so incontestable. However, careful as he was of his personal safety, he was not called upon to overcome any feeling of clemency, to which his heart at all times was a stranger; nor was he capable of comprehending that, having held a conversation with Staabs, he owed him mercy. True greatness is always generous; and entering into a discussion with a vanquished enemy is equivalent to pardoning him.

Being well aware that desperate acts of the sort are contagious, he desired that as little noise as possible should be made about the attempt or its punishment. He ordered Champagny to sign the peace at once, yielding if required on the point of the hundred millions, and Bubna and Lichtenstein consented to the sum of eighty-five millions, subject to its ratification by their Court. But Napoleon did not wait for the exchange of ratifications. Adding another trick to the many artifices he had employed during the negotiations, he quitted Vienna on the 15th of October, after loudly proclaiming to every one that peace had been made, although it had not yet been concluded. The long-expected news everywhere excited manifestations of joy, and rendered it impossible for Austria to recede, no matter how great her vexation and disappointment.

The exchange of ratifications took place on the 20th of October, much to the displeasure of the Austrian Court, whose interest it was to prolong the discussion. A few days later the French troops evacuated Vienna, after blowing up the inoffensive ramparts; a petty act of reprisal and a useless cruelty, destroying as it did, not a fortification, but a historical souvenir and a promenade dear to the inhabitants; the only object of which could be to punish them for having dared to stop the King of Kings even for the space of two days. The Viennese nevertheless, by the admission of the *Moniteur* itself, had tended our wounded with the utmost care after Wagram, and our staff had warmly thanked them for it in a

proclamation which ended by the following words : 'The great Napoleon shall know that you have claims on his kindness!'[1] The gratitude he showed them was by injuring their town; and this summary proceeding reminded the people, who were too apt to forget the fact, that their Emperor was nothing more than the vassal of a most ruthless master.

The peace of Vienna had been purchased by conditions which could leave nothing but humiliation, resentment, and national hatred in their track. However, thanks to our tortuous policy, it excited far more discontent in the nation which had profited by our victory than in that which had been vanquished by us. When the Emperor Alexander learnt the clauses of the treaty relative to Galicia, he was wounded to the quick. He read the document in presence of Caulaincourt, our ambassador, without uttering a word; then, taking up from the table an order of the day by which General Prince Gortchakoff was dismissed for having expressed sympathy with Austria, and making Caulaincourt note its recent date in undeniable proof of his fidelity to the alliance, he broke off the interview, not being willing to listen to the justification which the perplexed diplomatist was about to offer.

The violation of the engagements contracted at Tilsit was as flagrant as it was possible to be, and Napoleon in no way deceived himself as to the bad impression it would make at St. Petersburg. But he flattered himself that he would soon dissipate it, either by the advantages which the peace secured to Russia, or by his protestations in favour of maintaining the alliance, or, in short, by the fear he inspired. In his anxiety to right himself at any cost with that court, he resolved that Alexander should receive the reparation simultaneously with the offence, and spontaneously offered him a sort of guarantee for the future. On the same day that the treaty was signed at Vienna, the 20th October, 1809, Champagny addressed a long apology to M. de Romanzoff on the subject of the Galician cession. He assured him that Napoleon had only consented to it in self-

[1] See the *Moniteur* of July 23, 1809.

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defence, with the view of protecting those men who had sacrificed themselves for him from the vengeance of Austria; that he would take care to repress all revolutionary feeling in the territory given over to Saxony; in fine, 'that he was ready to agree to the extinction of the names of Poland and the Poles, not only from every transaction, but even from history itself.'

Such assurances exceeded all bounds: but want of good faith could not be effaced by want of dignity; hence they in no wise restored Alexander's confidence. He kept his grievance, though for a moment nourishing the hope of gaining some advantage by the guarantee that was offered him. This illusion however soon vanished, and the wound rankled by slow degrees, so that this much-vaunted peace ultimately grew into an almost open quarrel between Russia and ourselves.

While the house of Austria was signing peace with us, numbers were sacrificing their lives for her in one of those provinces which previous wars had detached from the monarchy. The Tyrol—the insurrection of which would have been so useful to Austria, if geographically placed in the heart of the empire instead of being situated in such a peculiar and isolated position—had been neglected subsequently to Lefebvre's first attempt to subdue it, and had been treated like a kind of fortress, the avenues to which alone are occupied and the exits guarded. The termination of the greater operations and the signing of the peace allowed Napoleon to concentrate against this province all the forces requisite to subdue it, and to replace it under the hated yoke of Bavaria. Drouet, Wrede, Vial, and Baraguay d'Hilliers simultaneously penetrated into the country through its northern and southern valleys, with strong columns of troops sufficiently numerous to crush all resistance. Before resuming hostilities Prince Eugène offered the insurgents an amnesty, which for an instant they seemed inclined to accept. But Hofer, a mystical and ignorant enthusiast led by fanatics who worked upon his credulity and his courage, refused to follow advice sent to him from Vienna, and after some slight hesitation took up arms again. Ere long defeated, and forced to fly to the mountains, he was there seized, in consequence

of an informer having betrayed his place of concealment, and ultimately carried off a prisoner to Mantua (January 19, 1810).

Prince Eugène, humane and generous by nature, would have wished to save this bold party chieftain, who had more than once rescued our soldiers, when prisoners, from popular vengeance. Hofer's crime, after all, was only that of patriotism, and he deserved some indulgence at our hands, for it was by such criminals that France had been saved during the Revolution. But inspirations of the kind were complete strangers to a mind like Napoleon's, which ignored any stimulus but calculation. 'My son,' he wrote to Eugène on the 10th February, 1810, 'I desired you to send Hofer to Paris; but as he is at Mantua, despatch an order to form a military commission at once, *to try him* and to have him shot on the spot when your order arrives. Let the whole affair be one of four and twenty hours.'[1] This order affords a striking evidence of the nature of that imperial justice which could simultaneously prescribe trial, sentence, and execution without ever offending the independence of the judges. Andrew Hofer was shot at Mantua on the 25th February, 1810. Up to the last moment he refused to make the disavowal which his judges requested of him, in order to entitle them to recommend him to mercy and thus relieve their consciences, and he died without showing repentance or weakness,—simple, faithful, intrepid, as every one ought to die for his country, leaving the memory amongst his fellow-citizens of a patriot and a hero.[2]

At the same hour in which Hofer was being executed at Mantua, the victim of his attachment to the Austrian monarchy, a grand and solemn reconciliation was taking place between the author of his murder and the monarch who had derived benefit from his self-sacrifice. The Emperor Francis was giving his daughter in marriage to Napoleon, neither the one nor the

[1] This letter, which is perfectly authentic, is one of those excluded from the *Correspondance* of Napoleon.

[2] See on Hofer's insurrection, the Memoirs of Prince Eugène, vol. vi. and *L'Histoire de la Guerre du Tyrol en* 1809, published in German by Hormayr, one of the leaders of the revolt.

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other apparently suspecting what an evil omen this blood-stain cast upon the contract. But on slight reflection every line of this extraordinary contract seems in some sort written in blood. How many generous lives had been immolated on both sides before such an alliance was possible between the ancient and the modern Cæsar!

An alliance with one of the royal races of Europe had been long contemplated by Napoleon. It was in accordance with all his instincts as restorer of the old régime; but events had never yet allowed him to carry it into effect. He had not been able to devote his mind to the subject amid the ever-recurring din of war; moreover, even the unexampled brilliancy of his fortune had not yet thrown everything else into the shade. From the period of the law of divorce, however, the extraordinary facility which he had granted to the rupture of the conjugal tie had been attributed to a secret desire of contracting a second marriage, and Josephine had followed the discussions of the Council of State with the most painful interest and anxiety. More than once the courtiers, always seeking to divine the wishes of their master, had, by their indiscreet foresight, anticipated his project of divorce from Josephine. He had not dared to breathe his secret until at Erfurt, when he sounded Alexander on the possibility of a marriage with the Grand Duchess Catherine, one of the Czar's sisters. Alexander, while pretending to be personally well-disposed to the project, alleged the difficulty of overcoming his mother's resistance, and thus the negotiation dropped. Now however, radiant with the fresh prestige derived from the peace of Vienna, more powerful apparently than at Erfurt, though less strong in reality, Napoleon had a right to believe that he would no longer be opposed by false reasons, or flimsy pretexts. He saw around him the thrones of Europe filled by vassals or flatterers; he was certain to see his demand granted or to make them pay dearly for a refusal; his resolve therefore was definitively taken.

What was his dominant idea in this project? Was it pride? or a desire to consolidate his power by gaining an ally amongst the sovereigns of Europe? or could it be, as he boasted, that he

sacrificed his personal affections to the State with a view to securing an heir to the Empire? The tie which bound Napoleon to Josephine had long ceased to be more than an attachment in which habit had as great a share as tenderness, and which was subject to great variation. Before it was broken by divorce, how often had it not been dissolved by caprice? The merit of a sacrifice might, therefore, be questioned, which consisted in substituting a young and handsome wife for an elderly and neglected one. As to those considerations regarding the future which were supposed to suggest the tardy and immoderate desire of leaving an heir, they generally render a man thoughtful, prudent, and careful of his resources, endowing him with that wisdom which, in the language of our laws, belongs to the 'good father of a family.' It is difficult, however, to avoid noticing how absent all such ideas were from Napoleon's mind up to the very end of his astonishing career. Chimerical though he was on many points, especially in the first conception of his projects, can it be maintained that he ever was so blinded by illusions as to suppose that an empire of such unlimited extent, could be held together by any one but himself? Were not notions of duration, of consolidation, of perpetuity, incompatible with the audacity and restlessness of this incorrigible gambler, ever ready to stake his fortune on the cast of a die? All his life long he had been dreaming of the glory of Alexander and of the dazzling applause of the world, never of the severe, patient, laborious career of those who are true founders of empires. A marriage with the daughter of a royal race was, however, the natural sequence of that monarchical system, the manners, ceremonial, and even the prejudices of which he had so carefully revived. There was only one thing which he could not borrow from the past, one which he found beyond his reach, and that was hereditary *prestige*. He had thought to supply its deficiency by talking on every occasion of 'his predecessor Charlemagne,' but no one looked upon this Carlovingian relationship in a serious light. He flattered himself, however, that he might obtain more success by decorating himself with the recollections of an

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ancient dynasty. It is therefore allowable to believe that, while taking into account the reassuring effect which such an act would produce on the public mind by the mere fact that it held out a prospect of more sober views, of wiser and more pacific dispositions, his principal motive above all others was to efface from himself the last stigma of the revolutionist and upstart, to treat as an equal with sovereigns by the grace of God, and to humble the old dynasties hitherto so disdainful, by depriving them of their one remaining consolation,—the pride of birth and race. Besides, the impatience and excessive susceptibility which Napoleon displayed in the negotiations relative to his second marriage, soon showed that vanity had a larger share in his determination than the wise considerations with which he has been honoured.

On the 20th of October, 1809, he arrived at Fontainebleau, as likewise his court, whom he had appointed to meet him there, and he instantly divulged the project which occupied his thoughts to his confidant Cambacérès. That prudent personage was struck by the tone of majestic haughtiness and sovereign assurance which the Emperor adopted while informing him of his views. 'Napoleon,' wrote he, 'has the air of promenading in the midst of his glory;'[1] and the image well pictures the change which mad conceit—very comprehensible after such great success—had wrought in his manners, hitherto more abrupt and restless than precise and solemn. Cambacérès had too much sense, and knew his master too well, not to understand that an alliance with the old dynasties, far from rendering him more moderate, would only bring his intoxication, already dangerous enough, to a climax. But the very confidence which was shown to him, sufficiently proves that the Arch-chancellor never compromised himself by inopportune counsels. He limited his remarks to a timid reference to Josephine's popularity and the danger of indisposing the nation by raising fears of a restoration of the old régime. But the instant he perceived that the

[1] This expression is used by Cambacérès in his inedited Memoirs, cited by M. Thiers.

Emperor had adopted a fixed resolve, he undertook, as he ever did, to prepare the way and smooth down the difficulties.

The Empress Josephine, after having long dreaded the misfortune now about to befall her, had, from the fact of seeing it postponed, ended by no longer believing it would take place. During many years the possibility of a divorce had formed the preoccupation and torment of her life; but she had regained tranquillity and confidence just as the event was on the eve of happening. Nothing had been done to prepare her for it. The letter in which Napoleon told her of his approaching arrival at Fontainebleau still exists. Its tone is more affectionate than ever, as though he wished to keep up her illusions till the very moment he should have to strike the painful blow. '*I am feasting on the thought of seeing thee again*,' he wrote to her from Nymphenburg on October 21, 'I embrace thee. Ever thine.'[1] At Fontainebleau, however, she was struck by his tone of constraint and coldness, and by the triumphant airs of her sworn enemies, his brothers and sisters, who had rushed thither to meet him; some to do him homage, others to revive his favour, which was weakened by so long an absence.

One significant fact soon increased the anxiety which she was obliged to conceal beneath a smiling countenance, amid the daily fêtes of the court at Fontainebleau—namely, that the communication between her apartment and that of the Emperor had been closed up, as if to announce to her that there was an end to all former intimacy.[2] The court quitted Fontainebleau to return to Paris on the 25th of October. All those sovereigns who had submitted to Napoleon's power and were his faithful satellites had been convoked thither by invitations that were only so many veiled orders. Rumours of divorce became then so rife that the unfortunate Josephine could no longer doubt the fate awaiting her. On the evening of November 30, the prefect of the palace was on duty in an apartment adjoining the drawing-room where the Emperor and Josephine were sitting, when he heard piercing

[1] Napoleon to Josephine, October 21, 1809.

[2] Bausset: *Mémoires d'un préfet du Palais.*

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cries, and with amazement recognised the voice of the Empress. A few moments afterwards the door opened, and, Napoleon having called him in, he beheld the Empress suffering from a violent nervous attack, and uttering exclamations of distress and despair. Then, helping Napoleon to carry her into her own apartment and to attend on her for a while, he had an opportunity of noticing that, although her grief might be real, the swoon at least had been feigned.[1]

In fact the much-dreaded explosion had taken place. The Emperor had at first determined to await the arrival of Prince Eugène in Paris, in order that the presence and consolations of the son whom Josephine so tenderly loved might soften the bitterness of his intended communication; but in a moment of impatience and harshness he had let his secret escape. When he announced the terrible news to her who alone was ignorant of it, to the woman who, by having brought him amongst her wedding presents the chief command of the army in Italy, had so eminently contributed towards his exalted fortune, eight days had already elapsed since he had desired Champagny to ask for him the hand of the Emperor Alexander's sister. It was Russia, his ally, not Austria, whom he thought it better to address first. Either this latter power seemed to him to have been too cruelly treated to be moved by any desire for a family union, or a refusal appeared less likely on the part of Alexander, or, in fine, he thought, and thought rightly, that it was more dangerous to wound so formidable a sovereign than to add one more cause of displeasure to the misfortunes of a monarchy now weak and vanquished. On the 22nd of November Champagny wrote to Caulaincourt that the Emperor Alexander had told Napoleon at Erfurt 'that his sister the Princess Anne *was at his disposal*;' an extraordinary alteration in a proposal which had not emanated from Russia but from us, and was now suggested by Napoleon with the view of making a refusal more difficult. Caulaincourt therefore was to broach the question simply and frankly to the Emperor Alexander, and to tell him 'that the Emperor, *urged on by the whole*

[1] Bausset: *Mémoires d'un Préfet du Palais.*

of France, was preparing for a divorce. Could he calculate upon the Czar's sister? Let his Majesty think it over for two days, and answer frankly, not as if he were addressing the ambassador of France, but a person passionately devoted to both families.'[1]

The affair was neither so simple nor so easy as those in Paris pretended to think, especially since they had so deeply wounded the national sentiment of the Russians by again, in so vexatious a manner, bringing up the menacing spectre of Poland before their eyes. As to any difficulties to which the divorce might give rise, they were not of a nature to disquiet Napoleon's sense of omnipotence. The Arch-chancellor had pointed out the course to be followed. The dissolution of the civil tie was easily obtainable, for, according to the Code, mutual consent was sufficient to entitle any two people to a divorce. No doubt there was a clause of a certain decree which prohibited divorce to the members of the imperial family[2]. But although the Emperor thought fit that this article should be applied to his brother King Louis, whose conjugal misfortunes were so well known, he in no wise intended to submit to it himself. Moreover, who would dare to invoke it against him? On the other hand, however, the dissolution of the religious tie presented more than one obstacle, for it depended on the ecclesiastical jurisdiction. At the period of the coronation, with the view of dissipating Josephine's fears and of appeasing the Pope's scruples, Napoleon had consented, at the request of his uncle, Cardinal Fesch, secretly to go through the religious marriage-ceremony, and the benediction had been given by the Cardinal himself in one of the apartments of the Tuileries. The Catholic Church does not permit divorce, or at least she has not tolerated it except in very rare cases, in lieu of certain favours for which she paid dear as she bought them at the cost of consideration. It was necessary, therefore, to get the religious marriage pronounced null and void, a matter that in fact would be equivalent to a divorce. But the competent authority in

[1] Champagny's despatch to Caulaincourt, November 22, 1809. *Archives des Affaires Etrangères: Russie*, 149.

[2] Decree of March 30, 1808, Art. vii.

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everything regarding sovereigns was the Pope, and the Pope was Napoleon's prisoner; no complaisance, therefore, could be expected from him. Here, however, the wise and wary lawyer again undertook to unravel the difficulty, by sure and discreet methods, as a too abrupt proceeding might have caused both scandal and danger.

As the sad scene which had revealed the domestic trouble in the imperial family was soon publicly known, the divorce became the subject of conversation at the court and in town. The unfortunate Josephine was supported, it is true, by the affection of her children, who felt the blow scarcely less keenly than herself; but being convinced of the absolute futility of resistance, she had, after the deepest anguish, submitted rather than resigned herself to that strong will which henceforward became inflexible. In order to feign consent, it was necessary that she should show herself in public. Hence she was dragged about to all the grand official receptions, and the scandal-loving public watched her closely, in order to note the extent and progress of her misfortune. The echoes of the palace more than once repeated her sobs and complaints; but it was desirable that this victim to pride and policy should appear content to sacrifice herself, and she was not allowed the satisfaction even of a display of grief. In the fêtes given at the commencement of December, to celebrate the anniversary of the coronation, Paris heheld her, with death in her heart and a smile on her lips, bearing the despair which was a torture to her, with grace, playing her part of sovereign for the last time, surrounded by her children, who, to use the expression of a contemporary, were dancing at their mother's funeral.

On the 15th of December, 1809, at a family council consisting of all the members of the imperial family then in Paris, Napoleon read a declaration intended to make known the determination he had taken to separate from Josephine: 'The policy of his kingdom, the interests and needs of his people, required that he should leave children after him, heirs of his love for them,—the throne upon which Providence had placed him. For many years past he had abandoned all hope of having

children by his beloved spouse. This was the cause then which induced him to sacrifice the tenderest affections of his heart, to hearken only to the good of the state and to desire the dissolution of their marriage . . . .' When Josephine rose in her turn to read the declaration, which had been handed to her ready drawn up, announcing a consent that was so little in accordance with her true sentiments, sobs impeded her utterance. She found it impossible, despite every effort, to articulate one single sentence of this studied part, her convulsions of grief were alone visible, and, for a moment the real truth overpowered the official falsehoods. Regnault de Saint-Jean d'Angély, taking the paper from Josephine's trembling hands, read aloud the document which under conventional phrases disguised the tortures of a spirit wounded to the point of death by humiliation, regret, and despair. Next day, December 16, the official report of this double declaration was presented to the Senate with the senatus-consultum destined to legalise the dissolution of the marriage. This senatus-consultum declared that the marriage contracted between Napoleon and Josephine was dissolved, and fixed an annual revenue of two million francs from the state treasury as the jointure of the divorced Empress, who preserved her title and rank, the Emperor adding one million to this annual income from the funds of the civil list.

Prince Eugène, who cruelly felt the blow levelled at his mother, in addition to the loss of his hopes of the throne of Italy, was forced to come to the Senate, and not only testify to the gratitude of his family, but, what almost surpasses belief, to speak of 'the satisfaction and pride with which his mother would witness all the happy results which her sacrifices would produce for the country and the Emperor.' Regnault, in a plaintive speech, described Josephine as 'sacrificing her tenderness for the best of husbands, through devotion to the best of kings, and attachment to the best of nations;' he adjured the senators, 'to accept, in the name of France, so deeply touched by it, and in sight of astonished Europe, this sacrifice, which was *the greatest that ever had been made on*

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earth!'[1] Such hyperbole rendered adulation difficult to those who had to speak after him. Lacépède, whose emotion did not cause him to lose his presence of mind, preferred to offer incense to the sacrificer rather than to the victim. He begged the senate to note, as 'well worthy of remark, that amongst the thirteen kings of France whose duties as sovereigns had constrained them to dissolve the ties which bound them to their consorts, four of the most admired and cherished monarchs might be counted—Charlemagne, Philip Augustus, Louis XII, and Henry IV.' Thanks to this mode of interpreting history, no matter what Napoleon might do hereafter, he would henceforward always resemble a great man, and divorce was only one additional perfection from the moment that it was he who desired it. Consequently, at the termination of these two speeches the senatus-consultum was passed by eighty votes against seven.

The dissolution of the religious tie was next demanded from the diocesan episcopal court. It at first excited scruples amongst the members of that ecclesiastical tribunal, and they would gladly have refused, had the choice been left to them. They alleged, apparently not without reason, that although competent to decide in cases of private individuals, they had no power with regard to sovereigns, and that long usage had reserved such special jurisdiction to the Pope. Cambacérès, ever subtle, replied, that the intervention of the Pope might perhaps be necessary to dissolve a regular marriage, but that it was quite unnecessary to declare the nullity of one in which no rule had been observed, and where there had been neither witnesses, nor a proper priest, nor even proper consent. In short, said the imperial petition, supported by the testimony of Duroc, of Talleyrand and of Berthier, the Emperor had only feigned consent, with the view of pacifying Josephine and tranquillising the conscience of the Pope; but he had never seriously consented, for he had even at that period the certainty of being obliged to contract a second marriage. In other words, he had

[1] Sitting of the *Sénat Conservateur* on November 16, 1809. *Archives parlementaires.*

deceived at one and the same moment, Josephine, Cardinal Fesch and the [1] Pope!

Cambacérès, however, did not refuse to calm the timorous consciences of the episcopal officials. He brought them the declaration of a committee of seven bishops, certifying that the episcopal tribunal was competent to settle the question. Its members then began a pretended examination into the reasons alleged by the Emperor in favour of annulling the marriage. The argument deduced from the absence of witnesses and of a proper priest—namely, the parish priest—would have had great weight but for Cardinal Fesch's declaration, made with a frankness bordering on courage, that the Pope, on account of the circumstances, had expressly dispensed him from following the ordinary forms—a fact most embarrassing to Catholic consciences. It was therefore the defective consent of the Emperor, the species of moral violence to which this singular minor had been subjected—that is to say, in reality, the deliberate deceit of which Josephine had been the victim on the part of her husband—upon which the pleaders were obliged to insist. But the argument upon which they most relied, and which had the greatest weight with the unfortunate judges, was the unlimited power and known character of the terrible chief under whom they served. The episcopal tribunal did not pretend to more virtue than Pius VII had himself shown on another occasion, and only asked to have a pretext for submission. Consequently they annulled the religious marriage, and the metropolitan tribunal hastened to confirm the sentence (January 1809).

Josephine, who suffered solitude in the very midst of the court at the Tuileries before the details of her repudiation were finally settled, buried her grief at Malmaison, where she ended her days a few years later, alone and neglected. Napoleon withdrew to the Trianon for a week's hunting, in order to mark the separation which was commencing. The negotiations with St. Petersburg for the conclusion of a marriage had not ceased for a moment. On the 28th of December, 1809,

[1] See Thiers, D'Haussonville, the Abbé Lyonnet: *Vie du Cardinal Fesch.*

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Caulaincourt had made the overture to the Emperor which Champagny had desired him to make. Alexander, taken by surprise by so utterly unexpected a request, was still completely absorbed in apprehensions as to the restoration of Poland provoked by the recent cessions in Galicia—cessions which had excited the liveliest and most deep-seated irritation throughout the whole Russian nation. Under the influence of these fears, and smarting from the reproaches which were openly enough addressed to him by public opinion, then much more free in Russia than in France, he had received, with an eagerness easy to understand, the unhoped-for offer made to him by Napoleon on the preceding 20th of October to join him in effacing all old recollections, 'in making the name of Poland and the Poles disappear not only from every political transaction but even from history.' If he could only succeed in making it disappear from the *Moniteur*, where it figured daily, the concession would not be unimportant.

Knowing the character of his ally, and desirous that such a promise should not remain a dead letter, he immediately occupied himself in arranging the draft of a convention intended to possess the force of law. This draft was formed on the following bases: (1) A reciprocal engagement never to allow the restoration of Poland; (2) Suppression of the names of Poland and the Poles in all public and private documents; (3) Suppression of the ancient orders of Poland and of all self-government in the Duchy of Warsaw. It was precisely at the moment when the Emperor and his counsellors were engaged in discussing the terms of this convention with Caulaincourt, that the demand of marriage was made, apprising them of the price which Napoleon intended to place on his abandonment of Poland; for it was difficult to believe that chance alone had united two such different proposals.

To give an idea of the sentiments with which Napoleon's demand must have inspired Alexander, it is sufficient to say that the Czar had thoroughly mastered the character of his ally. His private opinion, therefore, was very far removed from the commonplace or official admiration which he considered it

necessary to profess for him. Not only had he had frequent personal relations with him, quite sufficient for the appreciation of all minor shades of character, but he had been able to test him in peace and war, in small and great affairs. Alexander, whose only fault amongst many noble and generous qualities was a marked tendency to cunning, though a keen observer was also a just one. Conversations with him still exist, dating from this period (November and December, 1809), noted down from day to day by his interlocutor, Prince Adam Czartoryski, from which it is easy to glean his opinion of Napoleon. While expressing it with the utmost calmness and reserve, he manifested excessive mistrust of him. He declared that he 'was a man who considered any means legitimate, provided he attained his object, and who did everything by calculation, even to his outbreaks of passion.' He affirmed that he held proofs in his hand, that at the very time when Napoleon was proposing to him to efface the names of Poland and the Poles, and was making similar declarations to the legislative body, through M. de Montalivet, he was sending assurances to the Poles that these were nothing but pretences intended to deceive their common enemies. In short, his dominant sentiment regarding Napoleon was precisely that with which a formidable and perverse power would inspire a character naturally kind, namely, a feeling of aversion mingled with fear.[1]

Such dispositions, however, might be considered amicable compared to those which then animated the court and nation towards us, in consequence of the encouragement given to Poland, and the vexations caused by the continental blockade. Alexander, therefore, could not fail to be very disagreeably surprised by the unexpected overture made to him by Caulaincourt. Too politic and too courteous not to dissimulate his annoyance, he declared that he himself would regard with pleasure an union so well-fitted to strengthen the alliance between the two countries. But the decision, he added, did not rest with him alone. A special ukase of the Emperor Paul, his father, had

[1] *Alexander Ier et le prince Czartoryski: correspondance et conversations* (dated December 26, 1809).

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given the Empress-mother exclusive power over her daughters; he would therefore endeavour to obtain her consent, but to spare the Emperor's feelings would speak of his request only as a matter possible though uncertain.[1]

His mother's sentiments respecting Napoleon were long since known to him. It was for the purpose of escaping from the first offer of marriage that, after Erfurt, the Empress-mother had so anxiously hurried on the marriage of the Grand-Duchess Catherine to the Duke of Oldenburg, although that alliance was far from brilliant. Alexander therefore could have had no misgivings as to the result of his inquiry; but he wished, on the one hand, to convince Napoleon that he had done everything to obtain success; on the other, he was most anxious, under every contingency, to conclude the convention which had been promised relative to Poland, and for which it was intended to exact so dear and novel a ransom. On his side, Caulaincourt had received authority from Champagny to sign everything he might be asked for on the subject of the Poles, but at the same time to reserve the ratification for Napoleon, a precaution as significant as it was uncommon. In his desire to bring the negotiation for the marriage to a successful conclusion, our ambassador might very naturally entertain an exaggerated idea of the influence which the convention would exercise on the happy issue of the proposal of marriage. On the 4th of January, 1810, just when Alexander was beginning to give him hopes of inducing his mother to yield, Caulaincourt signed the convention relative to Poland, persuaded that so important a concession on our part would at once decide the marriage question, while the Czar, on the other hand, actuated by a precisely similar calculation, dragged on the communications with his mother, allowing hopes of the marriage to be entertained, in expectation that Napoleon would ratify the treaty.

Matters had reached this point when, on the 10th of January, 1809, Caulaincourt received an order to demand a categorical answer within ten days. This ultimatum, truly

[1] Bignon. Caulaincourt's despatch is not in the Archives.

extraordinary in such circumstances, has hitherto been attributed to the impatience and irritation which Napoleon felt at the dilatoriness of the Court of Russia. But a simple examination of the dates will suffice to prove how groundless is this supposition. The Emperor Alexander had been absent from St. Petersburg up to the 27th of December, a fact confirmed by the *Moniteur*[1] itself, and it was not until the 28th that he had cognisance of the request expressed by Napoleon. Caulaincourt transmitted his answer on the same day, but as the couriers then took from fifteen to twenty days to get from St. Petersburg to Paris, it was physically impossible that Napoleon could have known the contents of Caulaincourt's despatch when he gave that diplomatist orders to act, on the 10th of January, 1810, in a manner which, on the part of the ambassador of France towards the Emperor Alexander, was not only singular but almost offensive. Thus by a remarkable coincidence it happened that at the very moment when Caulaincourt was asking Alexander for the hand of the Grand Duchess, Napoleon was definitively renouncing that project of alliance, for he was too clear-sighted not to see that a rupture would be the inevitable result of so unseemly an ultimatum.[2] What could have happened, then, that was capable of so abruptly modifying his resolutions? The prospect of a marriage neither more honourable nor advantageous, but from a dynastic point of view more flattering to Napoleon's pride, had presented itself, and he had embraced it with the capricious folly of a spoiled child of fortune, without troubling himself as to the political consequences of so sudden a change.

At the last party at which the Empress Josephine was present in the Tuileries—a short time therefore before the 15th of

[1] *Moniteur* of January 21, 1810.

[2] The documents relative to Napoleon's second marriage have for the most part disappeared from the archives of the Foreign Office, but if it were possible to doubt that Napoleon's change with regard to Russia took place about the end of December, 1809, proof of it is to be found in a letter dated December 31, addressed to Alexander, and singularly stiff and sullen. One of Champagny's despatches, dated the same day, indicates a thorough change of tone and policy. (*Archives des Affaires étrangères; Russie*, 149.)

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December, the date of her departure for Malmaison—M. de Floret, a secretary of the Austrian Embassy, in conversation with M. de Sémonville, one of the shrewdest men of the day, expressed his regret that the divorce should terminate in a Russian marriage, while Austria would have been enchanted to give one of her archduchesses to Napoleon. Sémonville feigned surprise, and affected to see nothing but an expression of polite regret in the remark. As M. de Floret, however, insisted that he was in earnest, Sémonville lost no time in mentioning the subject to the Duc de Bassano, who, in his turn, instantly reported it to the Emperor. Napoleon had just received a precisely similar report of the disposition of the Court of Vienna from M. de Narbonne, then passing through that capital.[1] He in consequence commissioned the Duc de Bassano to make an offer in that sense, with all possible secrecy, to Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian ambassador, and to endeavour to obtain a promise from him without making any engagement himself. M. de Laborde, who had served in Austria during the emigration, and was intimate with Prince Schwarzenberg, was the intermediate agent chosen for this delicate negotiation. He found the Prince in despair at the Russian marriage, which he regarded as a fresh misfortune for Austria. No sooner, therefore, did M. de Laborde speak, than he seized the proffered opportunity as an unhoped-for piece of good fortune, and wrote off that instant to his Court, which was a prey to the same regret and uneasiness with himself.

The project of the Russian marriage was doubtless a very serious and menacing event for the Court of Vienna. During the whole course of the negotiations which had preceded the peace, Austria, independently of her very natural anxiety to lighten as much as possible the burdens imposed upon her by defeat, had pursued but one other object, that of irritating

[1] Narbonne's note, the existence of which has been disputed, is a document without date or signature, but evidently belongs to the end of November, 1809. The proposal is made by Metternich, who adds, 'This is an idea of mine, but I am certain that the Emperor would be favourable to it.' (*Archives des Affaires étrangères : Autriche*, 363.)

Russia against France, and putting an end to an alliance which was an insurmountable obstacle to the restoration of her power. This object she had partly attained by tempting Napoleon's cupidity with the offer of Galicia; but now, when in the act of applauding herself for her work, and seeing with secret joy the evident increase of the misunderstanding between Alexander and Napoleon, an unforeseen event threatens to crush all her hopes. Although it was impossible for true politicians to have any delusions on the advantages of a dynastic alliance in an age of revolution and with a sovereign like Napoleon, still the Court of Vienna knew that, for some years at least, the intimacy between the two Emperors would naturally become more close, and the two states having common interests in almost everything, without real or marked opposition in any, there were serious chances that the alliance, instead of being dissolved, would only be strengthened by time. The marriage then would be a finishing stroke for Austria, leaving her no hope of recovering herself for some time to come.

Under these circumstances it is easy to imagine the sentiments with which Prince Schwarzenberg's communication was received at Vienna. He was immediately informed that if the demand to which he alluded were made, it would meet with a favourable answer; and it was evidently on the strength of this assurance that Napoleon ordered that kind of summons to be addressed to Alexander, which if not exactly offensive was far from decorous—requiring him to give a reply within the space of ten days. Another equally striking proof of his preference for Austria is deducible from the public step he then took, as if to provide himself, in the eyes of Europe, with new arguments in support of the resolution he had adopted. The ultimatum addressed to Alexander allowed him until the 20th of January for his final answer. On the 21st of January—at least a fortnight, that is to say, before he could know what the answer would be—Napoleon assembled a privy council at the Tuileries, composed of all the great dignitaries of the Empire, with the view of submitting to their deliberation the choice that was open to him between these two great alliances.

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A discussion of the kind, begun at such a moment, was highly offensive to Russia, as she was thereby distinctly given to understand that Napoleon in no way considered himself bound by the demand he had made upon her. An attentive study of the facts and dates proves beyond doubt that Napoleon gave up the Russian marriage at the very time when his ambassador Caulaincourt was making the formal demand to Alexander, and that the privy council in which the question of the alliances was debated, was in his eyes merely a means of freeing himself in case the Czar's answer should be favourable.

Napoleon, in fact, understood his councillors too well not to know that the majority would always declare their opinion in the sense he desired. He never decided anything by their advice. It was not counsel which he asked from them on this occasion, but some manifestation which would have the twofold advantage of affording him one of those theatrical effects he so dearly loved, and be at the same time a pretext for disguising under the pretence of state interest a new manœuvre inspired by vanity. The state interest was not doubtful, whatever might be said; it was altogether on the side of Russia. Could the Austrian marriage restore us the friendship of the Court of Vienna? How was it possible to believe it after all the successive blows with which we had assailed her, after the wars which had deprived her in a few years of provinces like Lombardy, Venetia, the Tyrol, Suabia, Dalmatia, Illyria, and New Galicia, not to speak of Belgium, the imperial crown of Germany, or the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, formerly the seat of an Austrian archduke? How could it be supposed that the happiness of giving an archduchess to a hated upstart would atone for losses and grievances like these? In short, this marriage was only an additional sacrifice and humiliation, unless some great political advantage might possibly be gained from it. The melancholy confession of the Emperor Francis at a later period leaves no doubt on this point: 'In order to avert incurable evils,' said he, in his manifesto of August 12, 1813, 'and to secure some pledge of a better future, His Majesty *gave away what was most dear to his heart.*' How-

ever, the more humiliating such a calculation might be, the more necessary it was to make Austria forgive us even that. If Napoleon were disposed to make restitution to her of a satisfactory nature, the Austrian alliance might prove a happy event and a guarantee for the peace of Europe,—but nothing was further from his thoughts. The result therefore would be only to transform her from an open into a private enemy, and her intrigues would become all the more dangerous now that her disappointments were more bitter.

The Russian alliance might not unjustly be reproached with encouraging Napoleon in an adventurous policy only too much in character with the tendency of his genius; but the impunity with which he had hitherto exposed himself to this danger showed the security he felt in it, even when Russia only partially seconded him, as in the last campaign. The alliance would give him strength, while it cost him neither restitution nor sacrifice, merely requiring from him the maintenance of the *status quo* on the subject of Poland. It may also be noted that a refusal could not be displeasing to Austria, for no demand having been made, none need be withdrawn; while on the other hand, a simple withdrawal was offensive to Russia, even were she not disposed to grant Napoleon's request, from the mere fact of his not deferring his decision until the receipt of her answer. To conclude with Russia was to give the finishing blow to Austria, already crushed; but to conclude with Austria was to break with Russia, still powerful and intact.

No official report of the deliberations of the privy council exists; a blank that need not be much regretted. The majority of the personages who were summoned to give their opinion thoroughly understood the importance of the advice demanded from them. It was generally considered to be nothing but a ceremony intended to make known to the world that the royal houses of Europe were disputing the honour of giving a wife to Napoleon. The two opinions which had most weight were those of Talleyrand and Cambacérès; Talleyrand's was favourable to Austria, that of Cambacérès to Russia. Both were equally well grounded, with the sole

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difference that the system extolled by Talleyrand, though practicable after Austerlitz by means of the compromises and concessions which even he then deemed essential, now required many more sacrifices, and a political moderation which it was hopeless to expect from Napoleon. The other opinions were dictated either by complaisance or the personal positions of the speakers. Prince Eugène, preeminently occupied with the desire of preserving peace in Italy, and maintaining the integrity of Bavaria—his father-in-law's kingdom—declared in favour of Austria, while Murat, animated by the hostility which the Bonaparte family felt against every Beauharnais, spoke energetically for the Russian marriage in the name of the principles and interests of the Revolution, menaced, as he said, by an union in which the nation beheld a sort of reconciliation with the old régime. In short, two votes were given for Russia, five for Austria, and two for a marriage with a Saxon princess, of which there had never been any serious question, and which was only introduced to swell the number. It is usually stated, in the reports of this singular deliberation, that Napoleon limited himself to listening to the opinions expressed, without giving utterance to any himself. King Louis, however, who assisted at the council and voted for the Saxon princess, assures us in his memoirs that Napoleon replied to Murat and declared himself warmly in favour of the Austrian alliance.

On the 10th of January, Caulaincourt made known to Alexander the date fixed by Napoleon for his answer. This unreasonable demand, which could only be explained by some secret desire of breaking off the negotiation, was all the more singular that, as must have been well known in Paris, it concerned a young girl barely sixteen years of age. It was impossible to solve in so short a time the very delicate questions connected with the project. It is more than probable that Alexander would never have accepted so unusual an ultimatum had he not been preoccupied above all other considerations with the desire of ratifying the convention relative to Poland. He therefore endeavoured not to discourage Caulaincourt, though

at the same time he carefully avoided making any formal engagement himself. He told him that he had great hopes of overcoming his mother's resistance, but that her scruples and fears must be taken into account. She had lost two daughters from having allowed them to marry when too young. The Grand Duchess Anne was also still very young; consequently it would be necessary to wait a year or two. The difference of religion was another difficulty. The Empress wished not only that her daughter should not change her religious communion, but that the exercise of the Greek form of worship should under every circumstance be secured to her. She recollected that the Greek Church does not permit marriage with one who is divorced; moreover, the Grand Duchess had been previously promised to a Duke of Coburg. In short, there was no lack either of objections or pretexts, and the time fixed by Napoleon elapsed without the Emperor Alexander being able to transmit to him any answer beyond assurances of kindness and goodwill.

Caulaincourt's despatches announcing that the Court of Russia had not yet come to a decision, reached Paris on the 6th of February. That very hour Napoleon returned him an answer, stating that he considered himself free as regarded Alexander. And what proves at the same time how much he had counted on such an issue, and how far the negotiations with the Court of Vienna had progressed during the month that he was supposed to be expecting a favourable answer from Russia, is the fact that he was able to have his marriage contract with the Archduchess Marie-Louise drawn up on the very same day, and signed by Prince Schwarzenberg on the next, the 7th of February, 1810. The reasons he alleged as his motive for relinquishing the hand of Alexander's sister, help to show that his theme was ready prepared for the contingency—very improbable it is true—of his request being granted. 'You shall inform him,' he wrote to Champagny, 'that a council was held a few days since, and that opinions were there divided between the Russian and Austrian princesses; that opinion is divided in France *on account especially of religion*,

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and that even those who attach least importance to religion, cannot accustom themselves to the idea of not seeing the Empress follow the ceremonies of the church in her place beside the Emperor; that the presence of a Greek priest seems a still greater inconvenience, and that *it would be admitting a great inferiority to confirm by treaty his presence at the Tuileries* . . . . The Emperor Alexander had mentioned the extreme youth of the Princess Anne as forbidding any hope of issue to the marriage for two or three years to come, a circumstance which was a serious objection, and would very much thwart the Emperor's views.' Champagny was also to draw attention to the marked contrast between the slowness of Russia and 'the eagerness and cordiality of Austria,' in order, no doubt, that Alexander might learn for certain that negotiations had been going on with that power at the same time as with himself. He should end by declaring that Napoleon considered himself released, 'not from an engagement, as there never had been any, but from the obligation of tacit civility which his friendship for Alexander imposed upon him by the delay of a month in the answer to so simple a question'[1] A message dated on the following day announced 'that he had decided in *favour of Austria*.'

But his resentment was not allayed by breaking off—though in a style so rude as to be wellnigh insulting—a project which he did not forgive Alexander for having received with coldness, though he himself abandoned it so quickly. He made a point of immediately convincing him that it was in no wise the effect on his part of momentary spite, but a true change of policy, as though he were afraid that Alexander might not be sufficiently sensible of the unseemliness of his proceedings. On the same day, the 6th of February, he notified to Russia his refusal to ratify the convention signed by Caulaincourt, and of which he had himself suggested the conclusion. He who had offered to efface from politics and even from history the names of Poland and the Poles, now deemed it 'contrary to his dignity,' to declare 'that the kingdom of Poland should

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 6, 1810.

never be restored' (Art. I of the Convention), and as to the denominations of Poland and the Poles, it was 'absurd and ridiculous' to undertake any engagement to suppress them.[1] He would not even accept the clause abolishing the ancient order of Polish chivalry. He objected to all the other articles of the convention, substituting a project of his own, the ambiguous wording of which gave rise to the most subtle interpretations, though its principal aim was in reality to gainsay and vex a power that was not likely to be long in taking up his challenge.

The Emperor Alexander was too proud to shew the slightest annoyance on the question of breaking off the marriage; he even affected to congratulate Caulaincourt on the happy results which this intimacy with Austria would produce upon the peace of Europe. But as he was too clear-sighted to be duped, or blind to the very unsatisfactory kind of defeat inflicted upon him, he observed to our ambassador how impossible it was that the marriage contract could have been signed on the 7th of February, unless negotiations with Vienna had been going on long before that date—in other words, before an answer had reached Paris from St. Petersburg. To have advanced matters up to that point, it was evident that the negotiations must have been begun in the month of December. To this unanswerable observation he added another no less embarrassing. Without expressing his disbelief in the fear expressed of wounding the religious susceptibilities of the French by the presence of a Greek priest at the Tuileries, when urged by the man who had carried off the Pope from Rome, and still held him prisoner at Savona, he merely reminded Caulaincourt of Napoleon's declaration made at the very outset, 'that difference of religion would be no obstacle.' To these reproaches the ambassador could give no satisfactory reply, but limited himself to deploring the dilatoriness which, according to him, had ruined all. Such just grievances were not calculated to facilitate the acceptance of the project which Napoleon had substituted for the Russian convention. Alexander pointing out with a certain

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 6, 1810.

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bitterness its equivocal language and words of double meaning, met Napoleon's draft by a new and clearer counter-project, never deceiving himself, however, as to the slight chance there was of its being accepted; and allowed the following remarkable words to escape to Caulaincourt, which prove that he was perfectly aware of the significance of the Austrian alliance. He said, 'It is not I who will disturb the peace of Europe, or who will attack any one; but if they seek me, I shall defend myself.'[1]

While this dark cloud, as yet so imperceptible, but which might easily have been scattered to the winds up to the time when it burst with the thunderbolt of the Russian war, was insensibly gathering on the horizon, Paris was indulging in fêtes, demonstrations, and transports of joy in honour of the great and happy event destined to insure the peace of the world. Peace! This was the meaning it was universally agreed to attach to the marriage, as if to enchain the Emperor by the expression of the public desire. '*She announces serene days to the world*,' seemed to be the inscription of the new Empress's device. The better to mark his metamorphosis from a *parvenu* into a sovereign of the old régime, Napoleon desired to copy in everything the ceremonial used at the marriage of Louis XVI with Marie Antoinette. Not only were the marriage contract and the epistolary formulas of the ancient court of France reproduced word for word, but even the smallest minutiæ of etiquette. A commission of the ministry of foreign affairs was especially entrusted with the task of reconstructing this archæological code of gallantry.

Marie-Louise, married at Vienna by the Archduke Charles as proxy for the Emperor Napoleon, was, on the 16th of March, confided to the Queen of Naples, at Braunau. There, conformably to an ancient usage, she was unclothed from head to foot, and then reclad with new garments, as a symbol of the new life on which she was about to enter. At Compiègne, by a somewhat unbecoming infraction of the ceremonial agreed upon,

[1] Caulaincourt's despatches, from February 12 to 26, and March 8 and 10, 1810. (*Archives des Affaires étrangères; Russie*, 150.)

Napoleon passed several nights beneath the same roof as Marie-Louise; but even this derogatory proceeding was but a plagiarism, for he was imitating Henri IV, who, it was said, had acted in the same manner towards Marie de Medicis. On the 2nd of April the betrothed made their entry into Paris, amid a cortège of kings and queens, and a crowd of chamberlains, ladies of honour, pages and courtiers of every degree. The most illustrious representatives of the ancient aristocracy fought for the honour of forming part of their suite. A Catholic prelate, a Rohan, had requested to be attached to their 'august persons,' saying that 'The great Napoleon' was his '*tutelary divinity!*'[1]

On every side there was nothing but banquets, illuminations, dances, concerts, and distributions of food to the people. Next day, the marriage took place. On the same day and at the same hour, each professor of rhetoric in every Lycée of the Empire delivered a Latin discourse on the glories of the event; and in every church each priest had to celebrate and bless it. Upwards of a hundred and fifty poets chanted epithalamiums. The Senate, the Legislative Body and the Council of State outdid themselves in adulations, resembling an apotheosis. And all strove especially to prove that the marriage meant peace. 'This peace!' exclaimed Regnault in his speech in the Senate, 'what a guarantee has Europe acquired for its solidity and duration! France, transported with joy and love, has received in her bosom *an august messenger of peace*, the revered pledge of an eternal alliance! The world sees in it the harbinger of universal repose!' The president of the Senate was not less lyrical in his confident predictions: 'What interest has this glorious marriage not thrown upon our labours! Long years of sweetness and repose recalled to our recollections and responding to our hopes!' Foolish hopes, justly betrayed! the language of slaves flattering themselves to exert influence over a master whom they regret having created, but dare not

[1] Decision, dated February 15, 1810. The following answer is written on the margin of the letter: 'The Duc de Friuli will have 12,000 francs paid to the Chief Almoner, from the receipts of the theatres.'

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contradict! In spite of all, these days of intoxication and illusion had not the settled content of lasting prosperity. They were nothing but the momentary excitement of a whole people. These noisy fêtes, these transports of joy, and the pomp that was more magnificent than any hitherto heard of, were only outward show, and a gross deception, concealing the pitfall into which France was ere long to fall. The truth regarding our situation was not to be found here; it lay in the events which were taking place on the confines of the Iberian peninsula, on the cliffs of Torres Vedras, appointed witnesses of the disasters of our army in Spain; and beneath that sombre northern sky where the premonitory symptoms of the great catastrophe of 1812 were already beginning to appear.

However imposing might be the spectacle of such splendour and prosperity, it was too artificial to prevent the reality betraying itself by some discordant note. The first dissonance occurred during the very marriage ceremony. The religious office had barely begun when Napoleon was seen to dart angry looks towards the half-empty benches where the twenty-seven cardinals at that time in Paris ought to have been sitting. Then, addressing the Archbishop of Malines, he said: 'Where are the cardinals? I do not see them.' When the prelate enumerated those who assisted at the ceremony and tried to excuse the absence of the rest on account of their infirmities, he several times exclaimed, 'The fools!' with an accent of concentrated vengeance.[1] This scene rudely tore asunder the conventional veil which hid from view the real state of his relations with the Church. It might have been renewed in the case of each representative of the powers present at the marriage, could they have shown their true sentiments; for all figured there against their will: the Russian, because the alliance with him had been betrayed; the Prussian, because on this day he sustained a fresh defeat; even the Austrian, because, though hoping to derive advantages from the marriage, they were very problematical, and his court had by it received only an additional humiliation. If, instead of official

[1] De Pradt: *Les quatre Concordats.*

demonstrations, the emotions of their hearts could have been seen, every countenance which beamed with a satisfaction that was only extorted by command, would have burst forth into distrust, rancour, hatred and war.

The simple presence of these cardinals in Paris proved sufficiently into what a state of commotion the Church had been thrown by him who a short while before she had styled, with so much complaisance, 'the restorer of her altars.' After his removal from Rome, Pope Pius VII had been dragged from town to town as far as Grenoble, from whence he was taken back again to Savona, there finally to be kept prisoner. But the captivity of the pontiff had only been the prelude to Napoleon's measures for transforming the Church. Justly fearing the steps which the cardinals might take to supply what almost amounted to a vacancy of the Holy See, and determined to draw them on, either willingly or by force, in the new direction which he desired to impress upon the Catholic religion, he had the entire college of cardinals carried off from Rome and brought to Paris, with the sole exception of those who were excused on the score of their great age or their infirmities. It is easy, therefore, under these circumstances, to understand the degree of culpability those cardinals had incurred who had not seen proper to be present at the marriage ceremony. Brought to Paris by force, they would have been acting in strict accordance with their rights and dignity had they not appeared at any official assembly, but they were far from having pushed audacity so far. Their crime consisted simply in refusing to associate themselves with an act which they considered as a misappreciation of the rights of their spiritual chief, sole judge in their opinion of the difficulties relating to the marriages of sovereigns. If meant as a protest, it was a very timid one, showing itself merely by silence and abstention. On the very morrow, they went to the reception at the Tuileries, as if to redeem by prompt submission the hardihood of one moment. But revenge, as cruel as it was refined, awaited them there; for, after remaining in suspense for several hours, exposed to the derision of the courtiers, Napoleon had them driven from the

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palace as so many unfaithful servants. Not content, moreover, with insulting them in so severe and public a manner, he despoiled them of the purple, issued an order forbidding them henceforth to wear any insignia of the cardinalate, seized their personal effects, suppressed their salaries, left them no resources but a trifling income insufficient for their support, and ultimately banished them two by two to different towns in the provinces.[1]

These proceedings 'of the new Charlemagne' towards the Cardinals, give a just idea of the authority which he meant to exercise henceforward over the Catholic Church. He acted towards her like a creator, and intended to be obeyed without a murmur. He kept a very exact account of the prostrate condition in which he had found her at the period of his coronation, and of the power which he had restored to her. The Church had then lauded him as her saviour, and the title was not an exaggeration. But, in recalling the benefits he had bestowed, his memory failed to remind him of the services he had himself received, and of the share which the Church had had in his elevation. He also forgot the power of resistance and strength of propagandism which he had restored to religious ideas. In the revolution produced at Rome by the Schönbrunn decree, and in all the acts which had led to it, he had encountered so much gentleness, resignation and weakness both in the sovereign pontiff and the princes of the Church, as to persuade him that nothing, either in those enervated characters or those aged institutions, retained any strength capable of resisting his will. He intended, consequently, to act with regard to Rome as he had acted towards other states equally superannuated, and which he had completely transformed the better to assimilate and subdue them; he meant, in short, to act like a reorganiser who finishes and perfects some wonderful instrument of government.

Nor was it the Cardinals only whom he wished to have in Paris; the Pope himself should be brought thither in his turn, and partly by flattery, partly through fear, he would there

[1] Memoirs of Cardinal Consalvi.

inevitably succumb to his ascendancy. Pius VII would soon understand that it would be better to share the government of the world with the Emperor, to accept a magnificent establishment at St. Denis or Rheims, and to restore peace to the Church by accepting the rule of so formidable a power, than to persevere in sullen and fruitless opposition. While awaiting this expected submission, Napoleon, according to his usual method, was anxious to accumulate in a short space so many transformations and incontrovertible facts, as should render all retreat impossible. Astounded at the facility with which he had been able to overthrow the pontifical government, at the little noise which its downfall had made in the world, at the profound indifference with which its protests had been received, and the incredible docility with which an organisation formerly so powerful had allowed itself to be treated, he had compelled all the essential instruments of the old Catholic centralisation, such as the generals of orders, the members of the tribunal of the penitentiary, and other officials, to follow the college of Cardinals to Paris. He notified at the same time to the powers who had representatives at Rome to the Holy See, that ecclesiastical affairs would henceforth be transacted at Paris, and that their residence should consequently be fixed there; an invitation which no Catholic power was then in a position to decline. The archives of the Vatican, despatched in convoys of a hundred carriages starting every eight days, were also transferred to Paris, to be there deposited by Daunou in the Hôtel Soubise, and Napoleon even pushed his precautions so far as to have the tiara likewise brought thither, with a duplicate of the Fisherman's ring, and all the other insignia and ornaments of the pontifical power.

Thus, in some sort, would he henceforth find the officials and the working-stock of the Catholic Church under his hand. In Napoleon's eyes that was everything. Had he ever taken moral forces into account? Could the soul offer him greater resistance than the body? He might readily believe not, in view of the facility with which he had brought about all these changes. The acts of violence of which he had been guilty

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had not roused one cry of revolt, not even a complaint. The excommunication, stifled as soon as produced, seemed to have been the last effort of pontifical energy. The cardinals appeared at all his receptions, they frequented the salons of Paris, and for the most part drew with resignation the salary of thirty thousand francs which consoled them for their servitude. As to those who had dared to absent themselves from the marriage ceremony, they were dispersed, dumb, terrified at their own audacity. The clergy of France, too submissive to venture on any direct protest, had attempted a hidden opposition under pretext of organizing missions; but the missions had been immediately prohibited and all had fallen back into habitual silence. Nay, more: Napoleon flattered himself that he would induce this clergy, under the guise of Gallicanism, to cooperate with him in an enterprise, the only aim of which was to unite both the spiritual and temporal power in his own person.

In the month of November, 1809, he assembled a committee of well-disposed bishops, chosen by himself, whose duty would consist in pointing out to him a method of warding off difficulties and breaking down obstacles without overstepping the bounds of Catholic doctrine, and who should thus cover his acts against the Court of Rome with a kind of sacred authority. On the 11th of January, 1810, among other questions, he submitted the following to the committee. He wished to know,—if, in view of the obstinacy of the Pope, it was not desirable to call a council; if it would not be advisable to provide Pius VII with a sort of family council composed of prelates from every nation; if no measures could be taken to prevent excommunications; if the Pope could from temporal motives refuse his intervention in spiritual affairs.[1] The answers of the committee were vague and embarrassed, except in what regarded the excommunication, which was distinctly styled an 'abuse of power'; but this embarrassment in itself proved that these same bishops were capable of being converted at an opportune moment.

[1] *Correspondence de Napoléon: questions au comité des évêques*, January 11, 1810.

The natural complement of all these measures was the famous Senatus-consultum of February 17, 1810, which united the Roman States to the Empire. The Pope was to enjoy a revenue of two million francs, and to have palaces 'in such different parts of the Empire *as he might wish to reside in*' (Art. 15) —a piece of irony most unseemly in regard to a prisoner kept under constant watch. The Popes should, on their elevation, take an oath never to do anything against the wishes of the Gallican Church. The Empire would undertake the expenses of the Sacred College of the Propaganda. The Papal States formed two departments, those of Rome and of Trasimenus. The city of Rome became the *second city of the Empire*, and the residence of a prince of the blood or of a grand dignitary, while the heir—whose birth and sex were both announced even before the marriage had taken place—was to bear the title of King of Rome.

In support of this measure, and as a statement of the motives which had suggested it, Regnault read to the Senate a most violent diatribe against the administration of Pius VII. Had the pontiff wished, he could have answered Napoleon's grievances by recriminations far better founded; but in approving, nay, in sanctioning by a solemn act, the proceedings, which, when applied to other sovereigns, were odious, and of which he was now a victim, he had lost all authority for reproving them. On the day when he had crowned as Emperor the murderer of the Duc d'Enghien, on the day when he had exposed himself to be called 'an inconsistent puppet' by so fervent a Catholic as De Maistre, Pius VII had lost all serious influence on European opinion, and even on the opinion of true believers. He had no other *prestige* than that of his misfortunes, his private virtues and his weakness.

Regnault's statement touched but incidentally on the real true grievances which, in the name of history, might have been advanced against the very existence of the temporal power. He might have shown the Popes incessantly delivering Italy up to conquest, to foreign invasion, to civil discords, with the view of hindering the establishment of any durable nationality in the

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country,—even the spiritual interests of the Church herself perpetually sacrificed to the political interests of the Holy See. But such an accusation would have been the most irrefutable criticism on the man who had restored this same temporal power, for the sole purpose of making it subserve his ambitious projects. The more these grievances were just and well-founded, the more inexcusable was Napoleon's neglect to notice them. Besides, the Emperor, better than any one, felt that therein lay the only possible justification for the overthrow of the political sovereignty of the Popes. No one attains the power of moving the world and governing great nations without possessing a keen sense of history, and Napoleon had long since understood and condemned the *rôle* of the papacy in Italy with its lamentable influence on the destinies of that country. The justification which he did not deem it wise to put forward in Regnault's statement, he intended to get developed in doctrinal and historical works, so as to make them reach all enlightened minds. The aim of these works, according to him, ought to be: (1) that the Court of Rome had always used its spiritual weapons to maintain and increase its temporal authority; (2) that it had always been the enemy of every preponderating power in Italy . . . . and had employed its power to destroy every other.[1] This historical thesis, strictly true, was the precise plan of the solid and learned book which Daunon wrote upon the subject;[2] a book the only fault of which was its being published to order, for the advantage of a Cæsarism that was not less dangerous than a theocracy.

The judgment which Napoleon here expressed on the subject of the historical rôle of the papacy, had already been expressed by Machiavelli in the sixteenth century. No sentence had ever been more just, no condemnation better deserved. But the question was more complex than Napoleon and his apologists pretended to think. In politics one must never lose sight of the consequences of a measure; and the point was to know,

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, December 15, 1810.

[2] *Essai sur le pouvoir temporel des Papes*, by Daunon.

not whether the destruction of the temporal power was legitimate, but who was to be the gainer by it. Now its destruction could not, in view of the conditions under which it was to be made, benefit either general civilisation or liberty of conscience. All Napoleon's acts at this period—independently of his St. Helena confidences, which though often deceptive are on this point in accordance with the facts—tell us plainly enough the kind of régime he proposed to substitute for the system he had just destroyed. It was to be a sort of oriental patriarchate, in which the Pope, swearing allegiance to him, paid and inspired by him, would be nothing but a grand functionary of the Empire, a colleague of Cambacérès, a species of ecclesiastical arch-chancellor. 'What a lever! what a medium of influence over the rest of the world!' he afterwards enthusiastically exclaimed, when reviewing his favourite ideas of that period on the subject of the Church. 'I should have made an idol of the Pope, he should have remained near me. Paris would have become the capital of the Christian world, and I should have governed the religious as well as the political world . . . . I should have had my religious sessions as well as my legislative sessions. *My councils* would have been the representation of Christianity, of which the Popes would have been only the presidents.'[1] All the notes, letters and acts of Napoleon at this period prove that this was, in fact, the ultimate aim of his projects in the matter of religious organization. The Church once the slave of his will, disciplined like a regiment, and the two powers merged in the person of the Emperor,—there is no doubt, considering the infinite perfection to which he had already brought his despotism, that this system would have produced the most absolute tyranny the world has ever seen; a scourge compared to which the abuses of the temporal sovereignty were as nothing.

However grandiose this conception might be, it was stained with the vice which invalidated all Napoleon's political plans, and sooner or later was sure to bring his rule to immense discomfiture; it was out of true proportion to his powers,

[1] *Mémorial de Ste. Hélène*, by Las Cases.

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contrary to the spirit of the age, and incompatible with the progress of civilisation. The three centuries of free discussion that had elapsed since the middle ages had disseminated too much enlightenment and independence of mind throughout the world to permit absolutism of so monstrous a nature to become a reality. All Napoleon's manifestoes were full of invectives and declamations against the folly of Gregory VII and Boniface VIII, yet his dream was nothing but this system turned to the profit of an empire far more chimerical than their theocracy had been. Moreover, this Utopia of a despot had not the excuse of being conceived in an age of barbarism or darkness. A keen observer might have recognised the emptiness of the dream by one fact which is the touchstone of false ideas. The sign by which it is easy to know false systems is simply that when men even are disposed to submit to them the nature of things resists them, and one trifling obstacle is sufficient to hold them in check. Napoleon had reached that point when he might believe the greatest difficulties had been surmounted. He had under his hand at Paris all the machinery, all the instruments of the old pontifical government; he detained all its chiefs, for the most part his voluntary prisoners, submissive to his caprices, and wearing their gilded chains with perfect resignation; he had on his side public opinion, because deceived, and philosophy, indifferent to the misfortunes of those who so long had persecuted it. The Pope himself seemed to have resigned himself to the loss of his states, and, not daring either to protest or to complain, only spoke with friendliness of his old ally.[1] Pius VII—so often reproached with imitating Gregory VII—might have tried to use the same spiritual arms which that pontiff had employed; he might have launched an interdict on France, declaring it in schism, suspending in every part of its territory the exercise of public worship, he might have renewed with increased force the anathemas which Napoleon dreaded, though he pretended to

[1] Despatch of M. Lebzeltern to M. de Metternich, May 10, 1810, dated from Savona.

laugh at them. But he shrank from employing such energetic measures, and limited his defence to systematically enveloping himself in silence and abstention. And yet by this imperceptible obstacle the religious Cæsarism was wrecked, and the Pope's passive resistance was in itself sufficient to paralyse all Napoleon's plans.

In resuscitating the old imperial and pontifical theory, Napoleon had in part revived the disputes of the Carlovingian period between the Pope and the Emperor. On the occasion of the first misunderstandings, the quarrel on investitures had reappeared in the question of the institution of bishops. The Pope refused, under various pretexts, to fill up the vacant sees; an act which threw trouble and disorder into the heart of the nation. True, on the representations of his counsellors, he afterwards consented to institute bishops appointed by the Emperor, but on condition of no mention being made of the latter in the bulls of institution, thus in some sort denying to him as a right the prerogative which he was willing to grant him in fact. After he was carried into captivity, the Pope refused to institute any more bishops, alleging, not without reason, that he was no longer free, and could not fulfil the offices of the pontificate. The number of vacant sees rapidly increased, soon amounting to twenty-seven. The Emperor then, by the advice of men eminent in canon-law, sought for some method of overcoming the difficulty, and fancied he had found it by bestowing on the bishops, who were appointed but not instituted, the title of vicars-capitular.

Such vicars are, as is well known, provisional administrators, elected by the chapters to govern a diocese until the vacancy is filled up by the Holy See. By making the chapters elect the bishops named by him, Napoleon flattered himself that he was creating a kind of provisional episcopate which would govern the dioceses peacefully, until such time as his reconciliation with the Pope should regulate the position of the prelates. But, on the one hand, the office of vicar-capitular was not sought after by the titulars of the dioceses, because the authority which it conferred was precarious, disputed and

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injurious to their future dignity;[1] on the other, the majority of the bishops had been already chosen, before the Emperor thought of this expedient, and those appointed by him could not take possession of their sees without placing themselves in opposition both to the Pope and their own chapters. The obstacle therefore was in no wise removed, and the Pope's refusal paralysed everything. Thus at the very time when he had got hold of the wonderful catholic mechanism, perfected during the course of centuries, and was flattering himself that he could make it work to his advantage, Napoleon perceived that, in spite of all his precautions, the motive power necessary to set it going, altogether failed him. An almost invisible continuity existed between the two powers which sufficed to annul his influence. To keep the Pope enchained and powerless availed him nothing, if he could not succeed in making him, either of his own free will or by force, give that primary impetus to the Church without which it would fall into a state of inaction, or in other words give it that first *filip* with which, says Pascal, Descartes could not dispense when he wished to set his *vortices* in motion.

It was a question therefore of subduing at any cost the passive resistance of Pius VII,—a difficult enterprise, for the weakest natures are capable of perseverance and courage when they can be exercised in the form of inaction. The Pope, although treated at Savona with all the respect compatible with his captivity, had been completely separated from his former counsellors, and had no one about him but a few servants. Napoleon, who had long been acquainted with his truly touching qualities, his gentleness, goodness and resignation, and who said he had 'the temper of a lamb,' had calculated that such isolation, sorrow, and discouragement, would ensure him an easy victory over the Pontiff's obstinacy; the result, however, did not respond to his anticipations. Pius VII had seemed more consoled than distressed now that he no longer had to bear the responsibility and the cares of the pontifical government. His tastes, always

[1] Letter of the Minister of Public Worship, Bigot de Préameneu to Napoleon, Dec. 7, 1810.

simple to monastic plainness, were well suited to his new life. He had even rejected the extra luxury and state which Count Salmatoris offered him in the name of the Emperor, being satisfied with the simplest necessaries for himself and his attendants. He felt no regret whatever for his past opulence, and Napoleon committed a gross mistake in fancying that he could influence a mind like his, by the prospect of a large income or imperial magnificence. Nothing could be hoped for from that kind of temptation, and other influences were consequently brought to bear upon him.

Cardinals and bishops, Fesch, Caprara, and Maury, were made to address the Pope supplicating him to restore peace to the Church by instituting the bishops appointed by the Emperor; he firmly refused, however, to yield to their requests. Somewhat later an Austrian diplomatist, M. de Lebzeltern came to Savona under pretext of settling affairs of his own there, but in reality with the view of sounding the dispositions of Pius VII towards Napoleon. He then ascertained that while preserving a kind of affection for his terrible adversary, the Pope was more than ever determined to persist in his system of abstention, exclaiming, when allusion was made to his personal position, 'We ask for nothing, we have nothing more to lose. We have sacrificed everything to our duty; we are old, and have no wants. We wish neither for pensions nor honours. The alms of the faithful are sufficient for us. What personal consideration then can turn us away from the line our conscience bids us follow?'[1]

Standing upon this ground Pius VII was invincible, for no constraint could reach him there. Cardinals Spina and Caselli, who visited him a little later, in order to make fresh efforts in the same direction, found him immovable. But this was too great a trial for Napoleon's impatience and irritability, and he replied to the Pontiff's inflexibility by issuing an order to the appointed bishops desiring them to repair instantly to their respective sees, to administer them in virtue of their episcopal titles, and to take no notice of any resistance on the part of their

[1] Despatch of Lebzeltern to Metternich, May 16, 1810.

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chapters.[1] Then, in order to give more effect to the war which he declared—no longer against a Pope-King, but against the spiritual Head of the Church—he appointed Cardinal Maury, the eloquent defender of the clergy of France during the Revolution, to the bishopric of Paris, after having deposed Cardinal Fesch, his own relative, from that see, of which he was the temporary titular, and in which he often showed an independence that did him honour with regard to the Emperor. Maury had passed fifteen years of exile in Rome, where he had lost many of his illusions and much of his old asperity, and where his good sense had been strengthened by observation of the great events of history; but this was not a good qualification for serving the Catholic cause well, at a time when all compromise seemed impossible, and passion alone was listened to. The Bishop of Nancy, M. de Osmond, was appointed to the archbishopric of Florence.

At the same time, with a view to prompt execution, which should make his orders irrevocable as the decrees of fate, Napoleon worked with incredible ardour at effacing every vestige of pontifical government from the Roman States. Not content with having transformed them into two French departments, and entirely renewed their civil and military organization, he determined to uproot the clericalism which had become ingrained into the habits, the institutions, and even the family life of Italy. All the higher tribunals of the Church, the heads of orders, the college of Cardinals, and the archives, had been transferred to Paris, but the minor officials had all been left in Rome, and they formed an innumerable legion, recruited throughout the entire world. He first attacked the bishoprics. There were thirty bishops in the Roman States, or about one bishop for every 25,000 souls. In the remainder of the Empire the proportion averaged one bishop for from 600,000 to 800,000 souls, and often for 1,000,000. This number he reduced to four for the two departments of Rome and the Trasimène. The number of parishes, chapters, convents, and

[1] Napoleon to Bigot de Préameneu, November 16, 1810.

foreign beneficed clergy was no less exorbitant—in fact the unfortunate country was eaten up by them. The foreign priests were the first to receive an order to return to their native lands.[1] All the convents were then suppressed, their property given to the crown, and their inmates sent with small pensions back to their homes. The total value of the mortmain property in the Roman States amounted to 250,000,000 francs. Napoleon seized it, and immediately had it sold for 150,000,000.[2] The number of parishes in Rome was to be reduced to twenty. In order the more easily to get rid of the parish priests and the bishops, the obligation was imposed upon them, and upon all monks and ecclesiastics, of swearing allegiance to the Emperor, and making a declaration in favour of the Gallican liberties. Refusal was equivalent to dismissal, followed at once by exile and confiscation: 'Give an order to the consultus,' wrote Napoleon, 'to make all the bishops take the oath, to send those who refuse to France, and to sequester their property.'[3] And two days later he added, 'I suppose that all the bishops, parish priests, vicars and canons have, at this present moment, taken the oath, or are on the road to France, and their goods seized by the registrars. As to the bishops, not only their ecclesiastical but also their patrimonial property must be seized.'[4] These measures, for which Napoleon acquired a taste on account of the immense property that fell into his hands by such confiscations, extended to Piedmont, Liguria, Tuscany, and the states of Parma and Plasencia, and were everywhere supported by a strong military occupation and numerous detachments of troops. At the end of a few months, the unfortunate Italian priests who were banished to the island of Corsica, or were relegated to some corner of France, might be counted by hundreds.[5] Rome, deprived of its Pope, despoiled of its pontifical pomp, of its legions of priests, monks,

[1] Napoleon to Bigot de Préameneu, April 15, 1810.

[2] Napoleon to Gaudin, Duke of Gaëta, May 17, 1810.

[3] Ibid. May 7, 1810.

[4] Ibid. May 9, 1810.

[5] See the inedited documents quoted by M. de Haussonville: *L'Église romaine et le Premier Empire.*

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and cardinals, and with a general at the head of affairs, soon assumed the uniform and colourless aspect of a French *préfecture*. For the priestly government a military one was substituted—a doubtful improvement; while in exchange for what it had lost, Rome only received the empty title of the *second city of the Empire*, and the very ashes of that ancient home of Catholicism were as though dispersed and cast to the winds.

CHAPTER XVII.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CONQUERED TERRITORIES.—THE CONTINENTAL BLOCKADE.—NAPOLEON AND KING LOUIS.—HOLLAND JOINED TO THE EMPIRE. (*November* 1809—*July* 1810.)

THE peace of Vienna was thus barely signed when, in spite of the happy and reassuring prospect which his marriage with Marie-Louise seemed to promise, Napoleon was in open war with the Church and suppressed hostility towards Russia. Nor were his relations with other continental powers much more satisfactory. That Turkey, betrayed and abandoned by him, or Prussia, which he had dismembered as well as crushed by war contributions, and at this very time was treating like a merciless creditor, should have been deeply discontented, can be no matter for surprise. But his exactions and restlessness exasperated even our natural allies, nay, even those kings who had been created by him, and could not exist without him. His relations with Murat, Joseph, Louis and Jerome, despite the family ties that united them, often more nearly resembled enmity than good understanding, and, notwithstanding the submission to which their dependence forced them, their true sentiments frequently betrayed themselves in moments of impatience and irritation.

The very sovereigns whom he enriched by the spoliation of Austria, although outwardly expressing satisfaction, were at

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heart ill-disposed against him on account of the burdens of every description by which he made them repay his benefits, of the humiliating subjection which he imposed upon them, and, above all, the little security offered by a system that was nothing but a constant remodelling of their states. Napoleon considered it still necessary to maintain, at least in appearance, the engagement he had entered into not to extend the limits of the empire beyond the Rhine; consequently he distributed the conquered territory amongst his vassals of the Confederation of the Rhine. But while giving with one hand, he claimed the right of taking back with the other, without the least regard to the decorum habitual in a donor; and when increasing a dominion, he acted like one who had the right to dispose of it. To Bavaria he gave Salzburg, Ratisbon, the Innviertel and Baireuth; but he deprived her of the Italian Tyrol which, like the German Tyrol, she held by virtue of the treaty of Presburg, because he wished to annex it to Italy; of Ulm, which he desired to hand over to Wurtemberg; and lastly, of certain portions of the Palatinate which he reserved for Baden. Moreover, for these benefits she had to pay the sum of thirty million francs, as well as a large amount in gifts to French generals. The principality of Ratisbon, thus handed to Bavaria, was abruptly withdrawn from another of Napoleon's allies, the Prince-primate, President of the Confederation of the Rhine, who, in compensation received the principality of Frankfort, formed by the territories of Fulda and Hanau.

The Prince-primate, Duke of Dalberg, had previously been elector and archbishop of Mayence; this was therefore his third change of sovereignty, and with it his heir presumptive was also changed. The Emperor had at first named Cardinal Fesch, his own uncle, as successor to the Primate's title and sovereignty; now, however, Fesch was in disgrace for having defended the interests of the Church; some compensation, moreover, was needed to console Prince Eugène for his downfall from the position of an adopted son and the probable loss of his title of Viceroy; consequently, Prince Eugène was declared to be next in succession to the principality of Frankfort.

Jerome was not forgotten in the distribution, despite the many subjects of complaint which Napoleon had against him. He received Hanover and the fortress of Magdeburg, on condition that he should maintain and pay a corps of occupation, composed of eighteen thousand French troops, and should furnish subsidies to the annual amount of from eleven to twelve million francs. Jerome, accustomed like his brothers Joseph and Louis, to receive far more abuse than praise from Napoleon, possessed the great advantage over them that he never regarded his sovereignty from a serious point of view. Solely occupied with pleasure, and regarding his throne only as a means for indulging his vices, he cared neither to win the affection of his people, nor to lighten the burdens that weighed upon them. Besides, he never had to sustain a war such as was then ravaging Spain, nor to surmount difficulties like those which Louis encountered in Holland. Hence the favour with which Napoleon treated him, compared with the harshness he showed towards his other brothers.

This settlement of German affairs had been accompanied by the evacuation of the Austrian provinces. Napoleon thus recovered the free disposal of his troops. Every one supposed they could guess the use he intended to make of them, for, if he so wished, he could now turn the entire mass against Spain, the only spot on the continent where any one still dared to resist him. The hard blow which he had just struck at Austria, and the alliance he had contracted with her, which, though far from firm, was effective for the moment, guaranteed to him, at least for a while, the neutrality of those powers who were at heart most hostile to him. This unhoped-for respite could not be turned to greater profit than by hastening to finish a war beset with such difficulties and dangers. If Wellington, after his brilliant campaign at Talavera, had been forced to retire upon Portugal in presence of an energetic concentration of the Emperor's troops in Spain, how could it be supposed that he would be able to resist them, when reinforced by that army which had just been victorious at Wagram, especially if commanded by its own incomparable

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general? It must be admitted that, in spite of the formidable defences which Wellington was accumulating round Lisbon in anticipation of such an event, the issue of a new campaign, undertaken in Spain by Napoleon at the head of his victorious army, had many chances of being decisively favourable. Such a campaign was due to those unfortunate soldiers of his in Spain, who were worn out by a war *de grands chemins*, and he undoubtedly felt the obligation that lay upon him. He had entered into a solemn engagement to that effect on the 3rd of December, 1809, when, on opening the Session of the Legislative Body, he had said: 'When I show myself beyond the Pyrenees, the *leopard, terrified, will seek the ocean*, to escape from shame, defeat and death.' His enemies believed he had adopted this resolution, because it was more to his interest than any other, and was the one thing they most dreaded on his part: his admirers believed it, because it was more than any other in character with his genius, which habitually neglected all accessories in order to attack the vital point of each difficulty at once and directly, to bring everything to bear upon, and to sacrifice everything to, the one main object he might have in view.

But it was impossible any longer to disguise the fact that if he wished to attain this end, he must devote all the means at his disposal to compass it. Proof of this had been given. Since the struggle commenced in Spain, Napoleon had almost constantly maintained an army there, amounting to nearly 400,000 men, composed of his choicest troops. He had also sent his bravest and most experienced generals thither:—Soult, Jourdan, Ney, Lannes, Victor, Suchet, Junot, Mortier, and Saint-Cyr; yet, despite all their efforts, despite so much blood shed and so many battles gained, Joseph's throne was less stable than ever. However much he might pretend to despise the insurgents, they only required the aid of 25,000 English under Wellington to render all our conquests again doubtful. With such experience, it was not allowable to believe in the success of half measures. To conquer Spain she must be crushed; and to overcome such obstinate resistance was

a task great enough for all our united forces. Nay, more; it was a task not unworthy of the genius of the Emperor in person —above all, not unworthy of his authority, for his presence alone could put a stop to the rivalries between the marshals, and imprint on their operations the harmony and unity necessary to surmount every obstacle.

Great then was the astonishment of Europe, and equally great the joy of our enemies when, after the evacuation of the Austrian territory, instead of taking the road to the Pyrenees and Spain as had been expected, our troops were seen to march towards the shores of the Northern Sea and the Baltic, alternately to occupy the coasts of Holland and of Hanover, the mouths of the Weser and of the Elbe, the Hanseatic towns, the fortresses of Stettin, Cüstrin, and Glogau, on the Oder, which we held as pledges for the Prussian debt, and even to push their advance-guard as far as Dantzic on the Vistula. The severe and inexorable Davout had supreme command of all these forces, and was to fix his residence at Hamburg. Rapp was left at Dantzic. The continental blockade was the pretext alleged for this immense line of occupation, which embraced almost the entire seaboard of the continent from the mouths of the Vistula to Dalmatia. In consequence of the extension of this line, the successive reinforcements sent to the Pyrenees could not exceed 100,000 men. The exaggerated development imparted to this fatal system, and the complications it gave rise to, soon afforded Napoleon plausible motives for not quitting Paris, and for thus evading the engagement he had undertaken to repair in person to a country, the fanaticism of which he undoubtedly dreaded. The war in Spain continued to fasten itself on the side of the Empire, like one of those maladies which are often treated with palliatives when requiring violent remedies, and the examination of which is postponed because no one likes to admit their gravity.

When the Emperor published the decrees of Berlin and of Milan, they were regarded more as a bravado and an attempt at intimidation on his part, than as a fixed and well-considered system. By the first he had declared England in a state of

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blockade, at a time when he found it impossible to keep the smallest boat on the sea; by the second, he proclaimed all neutral vessels denationalised and lawful prizes, which submitted to the British Board of Admiralty by accepting its permit of navigation. It was doubtless difficult to imagine that a man of such keen intellect, after having, moreover, admitted the impossibility of conquering England at sea, should have conceived the mad idea of forcing her to capitulate by closing to her commerce all the markets of the continent. The primary condition essential to the realisation of such a dream was that Napoleon should be absolute master of the continent; and even taking this for granted, his plan would have been most difficult to execute. But the Emperor was far from having reached that point in 1807 and 1808. The continental blockade, therefore, at the period of its first notification, had seemed a mere defiant measure, an attempt at reprisal on paper, a last echo of the wretched style of declamation habitual to the Committee of Public Safety; and this conviction deepened in the public mind from the fact of the blockade being at first but feebly and languidly observed, especially during the period of the war with Austria.

But such illusion was not to last long. No sooner was the peace signed than Napoleon returned with greater zest than ever to his favourite idea, loudly proclaiming his firm intention of enforcing the blockade with the utmost rigour. In order to understand how preposterous was this system, it is essential to understand all its practical consequences. In reality it was not the suspension of English commerce which it alone involved, as seemed to be stated, but that of all maritime trade. The first effect produced by the measures published by Napoleon was to annihilate or render inactive the marine of all the old neutral powers. No trade was any longer carried on except through the medium of England. The blockade, consequently, meant not only the loss of all the manufactured produce of English industry, but also absolute prohibition of that colonial produce, which, in the north especially, had become of primary necessity, such as sugar, cotton, coffee, tobacco, tea, spices, the woods used in dyeing—an

indispensable article of trade—besides medical productions like quinine; and lastly, even salt, which some countries, such as Sweden, could only obtain by sea. But these privations, though trying, were not all. At the same time that these northern countries, so ill-treated already, had to submit to the loss of such highly prized importations from regions more favoured than our own, they had also to give up their export trade, for their natural products, iron, timber for building, pitch and tar, could not be transported by water, and the land carriage being treble the cost price, it amounted to positive prohibition.

Thus, for the majority of the European states, the continental blockade was, in other words, the destruction of all commerce and wholesale trade, besides the privation of the most necessary commodities of life, while it had cost them their navy and their colonies, and caused them misery and ruin. Moreover, it imposed upon them a series of insufferable annoyances; for the prohibited merchandise was not only watched on the frontiers, but searched for and seized in private dwellings; hence it has been rightly affirmed in regard to Germany, that the continental system contributed more than the conquest itself to rouse the population against us.[1]

In France and in the southern regions of Europe, where the natural productions were able, up to a certain point, to supply the absence of the colonial—where, for instance, sugar was replaced by grape-syrup, and afterwards by beetroot sugar, American cotton by Neapolitan, or by linen, indigo by woad, and coffee by chicory—the evil was less keenly felt. France, moreover, possessed all the compensations inherent to victory, besides the resources of the national character, marvellously skilful in turning everything to account; but to the northern countries, the populations of which were accustomed to demand from commerce the products and commodities which their own soil refused to them, submission was nothing less than suicide. And they were to impose all these intolerable evils upon themselves in order to consolidate the power of their oppressor! They were asked to endure them voluntarily in

[1] *Mémoires* of Comte de Senfft, former Minister of the King of Saxony.

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order to support the man who had conquered and humbled them, and still held them down beneath a rod of iron; with the view, moreover, of destroying the only nation which had resisted him successfully, and which still fought for popular freedom. Nay, more; he flattered himself that they would show zeal in carrying out measures of which they were the first victims, for the slightest remissness in the surveillance would perturb the whole system. It was supposed that they would attribute all their sufferings, not to that man who was their author, nor to his hated agents, but to the nation which was fighting against his tyranny. The more their exasperation would increase, it was apparently thought, the more would England become isolated and exposed to danger.

To this supposition, which was purely Utopian, Napoleon added another illusion, no less dangerous. It consisted in believing that the continental blockade had struck a serious blow at the prosperity of England, and that its continuance would soon make her perish from inanition. Facts gave him, on this question, the most positive contradiction. The industrial and commercial activity of England had never been greater, notwithstanding the debt of nearly eighty millions sterling with which she annually burdened herself.[1] The depreciation of her paper currency, which had fallen twenty per cent, was only caused by too large an issue, and in no wise by uneasiness as to the state of public affairs. It was soon remedied by the abrogation of the law which authorised the bank to suspend payments in specie.[2] If the blockade had closed many continental markets to England, the contrabandists, encouraged underhand by those who were ostensibly obliged to prosecute them, still kept a large number open to her, and her exports in Europe alone amounted to six hundred million francs; they had increased in a constant progression since

[1] These incumbrances amounted in the year 1809 to 1,940,000,000 francs, or about £79,998,000, of which nearly one and a half milliard francs was levied by taxes.

[2] Annual Register: Report of the Bullion Committee, August 1810. The Bank took advantage of the delay allowed her to adjourn the measure.

1805.[1] Moreover, she found great compensation in the suppression of all competition, naturally resulting from the forced inactivity of the neutral merchantmen. Thus, while it had been intended to strike her, the monopoly of commerce had been created in her favour. Lastly, she had also found immense compensation in the seizure of the greater number of the European colonies, and in the exclusive traffic of the markets of Spanish America.

But the continental system was so impracticable, that even in France, where its inconvenience was more easily borne than elsewhere on account of the richness of the soil and the advantages arising from conquest, its application was evaded, not only by means of contraband trade, but also by a fraud authorised by the government. This fraud, to some extent sanctioned, was carried on by means of licences, a species of permission to move about, for which a high price was paid. Owing to these licences, privileged privateers could carry to England our corn and wines, which she consented to receive because she wanted them, and our silks, which however had to be thrown into the sea, because she would not take them. They brought back with them certain products essential to our manufactures, such as dye woods and fish-oil. The great organiser of this fraud was Napoleon himself, who discovered an immense source of revenue in this unjust traffic, and who never felt the slightest scruple in ruining honest trade for the advantage of the most unworthy monopolists. Moreover, it is clear from his correspondence that his police agents did not fail to imitate him in this particular by deceiving even himself.[2] But while thus violating his own laws, he took care to reserve the benefit of such transgression to himself exclusively, and none the less persisted in imposing them, in all their rigour, upon his allies. It is easy, in view of such facts, to form some idea of the complaints, the subterfuges, the recriminations, reciprocal grievances, and difficulties of every description to which a system thus applied could not fail to give rise. In presence of the

[1] Annual Register for 1809. Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, April 18, 1810, State Papers.

[2] See in particular a letter of Napoleon to Fouché, dated Nov. 29, 1809.

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dangers, abuses, and crying vices of this blockade, which one of his ministers[1] called, 'the most disastrous and most false of fiscal inventions,' one asks oneself if Napoleon, in pushing it to such an extreme, really saw in it, as has always been asserted, a means of forcing England to surrender at discretion, or whether he did not rather seek in it a pretext for meddling in the administration of allied states, and of completing the conquest of Europe, which in fact was the underlying, but logical and necessary, preliminary of the continental system.

Certain it is, that difficulties arose from the first moment the blockade was enforced. They were of such a nature that it absolutely depended on Napoleon to make them eventuate in peace or war, as he might choose. This kind of ambiguous position eminently suited his policy, ever on the watch for opportunities, and careful to maintain his hold over others, without permitting any over himself. What, from this point of view, could be more advantageous than an engagement of which the exact performance was impossible? With his continental system in force, Napoleon found himself, in regard to other European powers, standing in the position of a creditor towards an insolvent debtor, who can always be prosecuted and his goods seized. Amongst the sovereigns who had accepted so impracticable a compact, not one was free from fault; nor could this be surprising, when Napoleon himself was so far from observing the regulations. But he thus held a high hand over them, and kept them perpetually in dread of chastisement.

Armed with this harsh legislation, he could recriminate with advantage against doubtful or ill-disposed allies; and could even invoke it against his own relatives, whose good will was above suspicion, but who shrank from the impossibility of enforcing the blockade, or recoiled from the atrocities attending certain measures. From this point of view, his brothers Joseph, Jérome and Louis, his brother-in-law Murat, and even the docile Viceroy himself, were not less culpable than the Kings of Prussia and Denmark. The incessant reproaches he addressed to them prove how difficult it must have been for other sove-

[1] Mollien: *Mémoires d'un Minister du Trésor*, vol. iii.

reigns to find favour in his eyes. If the blockade did not ruin England, it at the least afforded Napoleon a means of constraining, intimidating, and, if need be, of intervening with irresistible force,—a description of merit which in his opinion surpassed all others. Hence sprung his perseverance in imposing it upon every state under pretext of defending the cause of neutrals against England, and if it did not give him freedom at sea, it secured him every facility for completing the conquest of the continent.

When Sweden, towards the end of 1809, signed with Russia the disastrous peace which cost her Finland, Napoleon held in his hands Stralsund and Pomerania. Instead of claiming a fragment of her territory from Sweden, he astonished the world by his moderation, contenting himself with only asking, as his share, her adhesion to the continental blockade. In return for this concession he consented to restore everything to the Regent whom the Swedes had chosen, after having driven away their King, Gustavus IV. A small concession truly! for Swedish independence was what the Regent had delivered up to him. But Sweden, happily for her, was situated somewhat out of his reach. A few months after her adhesion to the blockade, Napoleon reproached her with not enforcing the treaty, in a tone of menace, and in terms which monarchs only use towards their subjects. He imperiously demanded the expulsion of the English consuls, the seizure of the colonial merchandise, even on board Swedish vessels, the extradition of Fauche Borel and other French refugees, and the abolition of every decoration belonging to the France of former days. 'My intention,' he added, 'is to make war on Sweden rather than to endure being thus insulted by her.'[1] A hundred times better would it have been to give up a province than to have consented to such intermeddling! A month later his summonses were still more threatening, and the Swedish minister in Paris was informed that his passports would be delivered to him if the Regent did not enforce the system.[2]

The daily tone of our relations with the other European

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, May 16, 1810

[2] The same to the same, June 16, 1810.

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states, notably with Denmark and Prussia, was similar. The position of Prussia was aggravated by the fact that she still owed us eighty-six million francs of the war contributions. The very natural wishes which she had formed against us during the Austrian campaign, were counted as so many acts of open hostility on her part. She implored delay for the discharge of her debt. King Frederic William wrote to Napoleon, describing the distress of his kingdom, reminding him that he had 'resisted solicitations from abroad, and stifled insurrectionary agitation,' that his fidelity in fulfilling his engagements had exhausted his people, and that quite recently he had been 'forced to sell his jewels and his gold and silver plate.'[1] But the Emperor refused to grant him the alleviations he requested, and answered his humiliating application by a positive refusal.[2] Soon after, the payments on which he had calculated not having been effected at the appointed time, he made Prussia the derisive offer of taking Silesia in lieu of the debt;[3] and somewhat later consented, at the request of the King, to countenance the opening of a loan to Prussia in Holland.

Towards Russia Napoleon could not venture to adopt the domineering tone which had succeeded so well with weaker states. In that country was a government which observed him closely, which thoroughly understood his stratagems, and which, though determined to continue to treat him with the utmost respect, dared to tell him the truth. Alexander had already most legitimate grievances against Napoleon, and although he did not think of urging them for the moment, he reserved them for future use like a prudent man. He had caught his ally in the very act of duplicity three times in the course of a few months; first, in the affair of the Galician cessions; a little later in that of the marriage, when Napoleon's confused denials of a double negotiation only served to throw greater light on his insincerity;[4] later again, in the projected treaty relative to Poland

[1] Letter of the King of Prussia to Napoleon, dated October 18, 1809.
[2] Napoleon to King Frederic William III, November 6, 1809.
[3] To Champagny, February 12, 1810
[4] To Champagny, March 16, 1810.

The continental blockade could only afford fresh causes for recrimination. It was at the time when Napoleon was demanding the strict observance of the system with the greatest earnestness, that Alexander became aware of the infractions he himself committed by means of the licences. It is easy to imagine the sentiments with which such deceit was viewed in a country where foreign produce was so urgently needed from the poverty of its own soil, and from which all exports had to be sent by sea. If the blockade imposed privations on us, to Russia it brought ruin, and yet it was we who had the pretension to impose it upon her, at a time too when we did not respect it ourselves! Alexander had no difficulty in unmasking the enormity of such base conduct. Napoleon answered his complaints, as usual, by denying the wrong he was reproached with. It was true, he said, that he had granted licences for the exportation of his wines and corn, but none for the importation of foreign commodities[1]—a statement that was absolutely false. Russia henceforward had the right to take every liberty with the blockade which she considered necessary for softening its rigour, and it soon became evident that conquest alone would force her to observe it in all its severity.

But of all European countries, that which suffered the most disastrous consequences from the enforcement of the blockade, without any doubt, was Holland. Dragged on against her will within the orbit of a military power whose burdens she shared without any equivalent advantages; deprived one by one of her rich colonies, of her flourishing navy, of her maritime trade which had been so brisk as to make her the negotiator of the whole world; left without any resource but the produce of an inadequate soil laboriously snatched from the sea; exhausted by having to maintain an army that was as incommensurate with her means as it was above her needs, and the principal duty of which consisted in holding down Holland herself under its yoke,—she had long since been living on a mere remnant of her ancient opulence. No trade remained to her but her banks—still the great Exchanges of Europe,—her

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, February 18, 1810.

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cheeses and her salted provisions, although the latter were daily more and more injured by the hindrances arising from English surveillance on the importation of salt by sea. Under these circumstances, depriving her of her trade in colonial commodities, however much reduced these were by the naval war, was striking her a fatal blow, and it may be said, literally, that if other countries suffered from the blockade, Holland was dying from it.

Attached though he was to his brother, King Louis could not continue insensible to these evils. Not deficient in wisdom and cultivation, though ungifted with much largeness of mind, of a simple and honest disposition, hiding beneath a cold exterior much passionate feeling, sincerely philanthropic despite fits of ill-humour which were principally due to his bad health and conjugal misfortunes, King Louis considered that in accepting the Dutch crown he had also accepted duties towards his subjects. From the very morrow of his elevation to the throne he had constituted himself their official defender against Napoleon. Like his brother Joseph he soon discovered to his cost that the pretended kings created by Napoleon were, in his mind, only so many disguises of conquest and instruments of despotism. In the eyes of the Emperor their only object was the preservation, under his hand of countries which he did not yet dare to unite openly to the Empire, out of consideration for the opinion of Europe. They were nothing but the primary form of future annexations.

Louis, therefore, had done his best to defend the lives and fortunes of his subjects against Napoleon. He had endeavoured to diminish the contingents they were called upon to supply to our forces by land and sea, to reduce the number of vessels and gunboats they were obliged to maintain, to lighten the taxes; lastly and especially to grant some toleration and facilities to their commerce which had been so cruelly dealt with. These facts had become matter of unceasing reproach on the part of Napoleon; nay, sometimes of the harshest invective, and no act of Louis's administration any longer found favour in his sight. Louis's faults, which were of a most inoffensive character, such as are committed by a man who loves to play

the sovereign—as for instance the restoration of ancient titles of nobility and the creation of marshals—were regarded by Napoleon as positive crimes, and he soon began to repent of ever having placed Louis on the throne of Holland. Even on the 27th of March, 1808, when offering him the crown of Spain in preference to Joseph, he wrote: 'The climate of Holland does not suit you. Besides, she cannot rise from her ruins.' Again later, in August of the same year, he caused a proposal to be made to Louis to give him Brabant and Zealand in exchange for the Hanseatic towns; but Louis indignantly repelled this project for the dismemberment of the country which had confided to him her destinies.

It was thus against his own brother that Napoleon was induced to make use, for the first time, of the facility which this continental system afforded him for completing the subjugation of Europe. The cautious but persevering and unconquerable resistance which Louis opposed to an over-strict application of the blockade, at a time when Napoleon imperiously demanded its enforcement, changed Napoleon's vague desires into a fixed resolve. On his return to Paris from the Austrian campaign, Napoleon had already decided on dethroning his brother, but he wished to avoid as much as possible the odium of such an act, by casting, according to his custom, at least some apparent wrongs on the man whose downfall he contemplated: in short, by approaching it by such gradations as were necessary for the preparation of public opinion. The relations between the two brothers had, at that period, reached such a point of bitterness, that Louis every instant expected to see Holland invaded, and was calculating his means of defence beforehand. After the expedition to Walcheren, both Zealand and Brabant had been occupied by our troops under the pretext of a demonstration against the English, and King Louis had been invited to Paris, where his brother had just arrived. He was too clear-sighted not to understand the meaning of this manœuvre; and, notwithstanding the paucity of his resources, was inclined, for an instant, to decline the invitation, and to call his people to arms. His ministers however advised him to obey, and he left for France.

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Louis had barely reached Paris, when he learned the scope of his brother's intentions. To his intense surprise, and without having been told anything, he read the following declaration in the newspapers, extracted from the Emperor's speech at the opening of the Legislative Body: 'Holland, lying between England and France, is crushed equally by both; she is the outlet of the principal arteries of my empire. *Changes will become necessary.* The safety of my frontiers and the interest of the two countries imperatively require it.' The language of the Minister of the Interior was still more significant. 'Holland,' he said, '*is in reality only a portion of France.* That country may define itself by stating that it is the alluvium of the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt; in other words, one of the great arteries of the Empire . . . . Crushed between France and England, Holland is deprived both of the advantages enjoyed by those who oppose our general system, because she must refuse them, and of those which she might enjoy. *It is time then that this should revert to its natural order.*' This indirect manner of notifying to Louis that his kingdom was about to be taken possession of was more galling even than the famous formula by which Europe was informed that the King of Naples had 'ceased to reign.' Louis was not even honoured by a mention. To the Emperor it was simply a question of geography, and no more. From the moment that Holland was nothing but a 'portion of France,' the 'natural order' was not difficult to discover. It was merely a return to the mother country.

Such was the form employed by Napoleon for making known to Louis that he had disposed of his kingdom. Simple convenience was henceforth to be sufficient motive for a conquest. Louis's first impulse on seeing the snare into which he had fallen, was to escape to Holland; but he perceived that he was watched. Some days later, as he was about to leave his mother's house, where he had alighted on reaching Paris, he was stopped by *gens d'armes d'élite.*[1] In this extremity he sent his equerry, Comte de Bylandt, to Amsterdam, with an order to close the gates of the fortresses, and especially of the capital, to our troops.

[1] *Documents historiques sur la Hollande*, by King Louis; vol. iii

This order was executed. Despite the dregs which he had swallowed from his brother's hand since his elevation to the throne, Louis, in the depths of his heart, still wished to reign. His ministers moreover advised him to submit, in order at least to preserve to their country a nominal independence, which one day might become more real. Consequently he declared himself ready to accept every condition the Emperor might choose to impose upon him. Napoleon then consented to give way. In a letter dated December 21, 1809,[1] after a long statement of his grievances against Louis, he offered to restore his crown, in exchange for an undertaking on his part to prohibit English commerce, to maintain a fleet of fourteen vessels and seven frigates, an army of 25,000 men, and to suppress the titles of nobility and the marshals. But when according him this favour for the time being, he took care to add: '*I do not conceal from you that* it is my intention to unite Holland to France as the most fatal blow I can strike at England.' He even showed him, ready drawn up, the decree ordering the union.

This decree Napoleon had for an instant been on the point of publishing. But just as he was about to carry his threat into execution, he either feared to meet serious resistance in one portion of Holland, or he foresaw the bad effect that would be produced in Europe by a conflict which had already made too much noise; so he determined to postpone his project. In his desire to turn this great sacrifice to some account, he thought of using the simple threat of annexation as a means of influencing and forcing England to peace. The idea was not new to him. He had several times made use of this species of intimidation; he had several times declared to the negotiators of that power, that England would force him to conquer the continent, in order to arm it, he said, throughout its length and breadth against her; in reality to arm it against himself. Now he would say to the English, Make peace, or I will annex Holland. If the negotiation were to succeed, would it not be a masterpiece of diplomacy to have

[1] This letter, a most remarkable one, has not been inserted in Napoleon's correspondence.

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obtained peace from England, not in exchange for any present advantage, but with a view to avert a contingent danger? If it failed, he would have a fresh pretext for invading Holland, and, in any case, would thus gain sufficient time to avoid precipitation or violence which might be equally compromising.

To have any chance of being listened to, his call upon the good-will of England should emanate from King Louis. It was to save him from the imminent danger which threatened him and his kingdom that England was to be asked to forget all her old grievances against the invader of Italy, of Switzerland, of Spain, of Portugal, and even of Germany. Consequently, it was in the name of Louis and of the Cabinet of Amsterdam that the appointed negotiator, M. Labouchère, a rich Dutch banker, son-in-law and partner of Baring, the great English banker, started for England in the beginning of February 1810. Baring was intimate with Lord Wellesley, the elder brother of Wellington, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and hence the reason that Labouchere had been chosen. But from the simple fact that Labouchere could only speak in the name of the Dutch Cabinet, the conditions he had to offer England could not be peculiarly acceptable. How in fact could it be supposed that members of a government, then in the zenith of its strength and power, burning with the ardour of the passionate struggle they were sustaining for the liberty of Europe, would allow themselves to be turned aside from their task through fear of the annexation of Holland, or would make peace in order to preserve a throne to King Louis, as if they did not know that Holland was long since united to France, virtually if not by legal right, and as though they had not other interests at heart incomparably more important?

Such overtures were pitiful, and do little honour to Napoleon's political genius. They prove moreover, what can also be seen by the everlasting declamations in the *Moniteur*, that he had no clear idea of the real situation of England. He considered her to be in the last stage of distress and on the point of succumbing when, on the contrary, she had never been more resolute. She desired peace, it is true, but far less than we did, for the simple reason that she was suffering far less from the effects of the war.

To induce England to treat seriously, had she been willing to come to terms, concessions were needed very different from the ridiculous offer of saving Holland. Apparently it was some feeling of the inutility of so ill-conceived a mission, quite as much as his own tendency to meddle in everything, that urged Fouché, unknown to his master, simultaneously to open a negotiation with the English Cabinet. Evidently foreseeing the very probable failure of Labouchere, he hoped, in his stead, to present Napoleon with a treaty of peace, wanting nothing but his signature. Certain it is, at any rate, that Fouché's agent in broaching the subject to the Marquis of Wellesley, submitted at least some sensible and acceptable proposals, even though accompanied by others that were purely chimerical. The agent, an old Irish officer of the name of Fagan, in the service of Condé, was presented to Wellesley by Lord Yarmouth. He informed the minister that if England were desirous of peace, it could easily be concluded on the basis of the restoration of the Bourbons in Spain, with some compensation to Louis XVIII, to be made at the expense of the United States of America. The latter arrangement was a pure dream, but no absolute decision had been come to on any point, and he professed himself ready to discuss any terms that England might propose.

Fagan's overtures preceded Labouchere's by some days. Lord Wellesley politely but distinctly declined them, on the ground of their bearing no official character and being made on no sufficient authority. As to Labouchere's proposals, he did not regard them as the result of intrigue, still he could with difficulty consider a negotiation serious which was based on nothing but Napoleon's clemency towards Holland. England in no wise ignored that Louis in Holland was only another name for his brother; she did not want to prevent Napoleon unmasking himself; on the contrary, it was her interest to urge him on in the path of usurpation until he should thereby rouse the whole world against him.

The English public had been furious at the shameful issue of the Walcheren expedition, but a dishonourable peace would have excited their indignation far more. Lord Chatham's

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conduct had been the subject of a parliamentary inquiry, and he had been obliged to resign his appointment as director-general of artillery. In short, that ignominious failure, without actually causing the downfall of the whole Cabinet, threw out two of its principal members, Canning and Lord Castlereagh, who had to settle their quarrel by the celebrated duel in which Canning was wounded. Still, despite the inevitable complaints of mismanagement, with which the opposition filled Parliament, the nation was more irritated than uneasy or disheartened. Lord Wellesley, who had succeeded Canning, was in no wise responsible for the faults of the previous administration, and he was popular, thanks to his great services in India, and also to some reflection of his brother's renown. Of a highly enlightened mind, moreover, and perfectly free from prejudice, he was not suspected of sharing either the views of former ministers, whose first aim would be to avenge the humiliation of Walcheren, nor, on the other hand, the interested zeal of the opposition in favour of peace. No English statesman, therefore, was better qualified to act impartially.

He listened to Labouchere's communications with the most perfect courtesy, but quickly perceived that their avowed object—namely, the desire of nominally preserving to Holland an independence which had long since ceased to exist in reality—could form no serious basis of negotiation with England. Moreover, Labouchere was not empowered to support the proposals by any except vague assurances, for the sincerity of which there was no guarantee, as he could only speak in the name of the Dutch ministers. No prudent government could venture to excite public opinion on such uncertain data, by hopes probably impossible to be realised, or to check the ardour of the nation for war, at the very moment it was beginning not to feel the burden. England was becoming accustomed to a state of war, and even derived great advantages from it, which went far to compensate her for its inevitable evils. If peace were desired, he should speak decidedly in the name of France, and offer clearly defined conditions, not overtures that were neither distinct nor accompanied by any guarantee. Labou-

chere obtained nothing but this verbal declaration, to which he added his own observations on the state of public opinion in England, in every way coinciding with those of Wellesley.[1]

This reception, however, did not prevent Napoleon returning to the charge of the British Cabinet, though on the next occasion he restricted the negotiations to an understanding on the subject of the blockade. England was to withdraw the Orders in Council of 1807, in return for which the Emperor was to evacuate not only Holland but the Hanseatic towns, restoring to the English all their markets on the continent. If this was not definitive peace, it would at least be a great step towards it. In the instructions sent to Labouchere, an attempt was made to prove that 'France was not suffering in any way from the actual state of affairs.' But in the absence of other facts, was not his very persistence a proof of the contrary? And if there were a semblance of equity in the offer of a simultaneous withdrawal of the blockade, could the English be ignorant that on their side it was most efficient, reducing all the navies of continental states to complete inaction, while on his it was eminently fictitious, in no way hindering their trade, but, above all, doing great injury to his allies? Napoleon's note ended by a few words which admirably defined the spirit of his system: 'From not having made peace sooner,' he said, 'England has lost Naples, Spain, Portugal, and the market of Trieste. It is evident that if she delays it any longer, she will lose Holland, the Hanseatic towns, and Sicily.'[2] To have given expression to his whole thought he ought to have added Prussia, Denmark, Sweden and Russia, for such was the necessary consequence of his system. And this forced conclusion, far from frightening England, would have overpowered her with joy, by allowing her to foresee the inevitable downfall, at no distant day, of a mind extravagant enough to form his plans in so wild a fashion.

The second proposal met with no better success than

[1] *Note de communication verbale* of the Marquis of Wellesley to M. Labouchere, February 12, 1810. *Compte rendu de* M. Labouchere, February 12, 1810.

[2] Napoleon to Champagny, March 20, 1810.

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the first. The moment had arrived for carrying out the threats about which so much noise had been made, and for coming to some decision with regard to Holland, still in suspense as to her fate. Even during the course of Labouchere's negotiations fresh complications had taken place in Louis's position. Napoleon had successively learned that entrance to our troops had been refused at Berg-op-Zoom and Breda, and that Krayenhof, the Minister of War, had fortified Amsterdam. This serious news reached him at the very time when he fancied he had definitively overcome his brother's obstinacy. It threw him into a positive paroxysm of rage: 'Has the King of Holland become perfectly mad?' he wrote to Fouché. 'You will ask him if his ministers have acted by his orders or of their own accord; and you will declare to him that if it is of their own accord, I shall have them arrested and have all their heads cut off.'[1] Unhappy Louis, who had hitherto been alternating between fear and anger, submission and rebellion, was still at Paris, at the mercy of his dreaded brother. His budding desires of war to the knife were not supported even by his ministers, who were too deeply impressed with the uselessness of such resistance. On this occasion he recognised the necessity of yielding, if he wished to save even a portion of his kingdom. He therefore threw open the fortresses, requested Krayenhof and Mollerus—the only two ministers who advised that the independence of their country should be defended to the last extremity—to send in their resignations, and declared himself ready to submit to the will of the Emperor.

Napoleon was thus brought back to his project of annexing Holland, and he held to it more strongly than ever; but not having yet (March 1810) lost all hope of coming to some understanding with England, he dreaded the effect of too noisy a scandal. Besides, scarcely three months had elapsed since Montalivet, as Minister of the Interior, had once again solemnly declared in a speech, 'that he might easily have extended the limits of France beyond the Rhine, *but that that river was the*

[1] This letter, quoted by M. Thiers, and dated March 3, 1810, has not been inserted in the *Correspondance*.

invariable margin of the states bordering on his Empire.'[1] He therefore preferred a middle course, which, while placing Holland in his hands, would still keep up appearances and yet give him the right to finish off the matter whenever he pleased.

By a treaty which he had to sign on the 16th of March, 1810, Louis undertook not only to fulfil the conditions previously stipulated—as to the blockade, the maintenance of the army by sea and land, the marshals, and the nobility—but to accept a state of vassalage that was worse than an abdication. He gave up to the Emperor all that portion of Holland which is situated on the left bank of the Rhine, as far as the Wahal, and which formed one-fourth of his kingdom. He consented to allow his kingdom to be garrisoned by a French corps of occupation; he received all his custom-house officials from France; he handed over to the Emperor the right of decision on maritime prizes; and lastly, he undertook to place under sequestration every American vessel then in his ports.

This last stipulation was the anticipatory application of a decree published a few days later (dated March 23, 1810), and by virtue of which, all American vessels entering any port of the French Empire from the 20th of March, 1809, and onward, were to be seized and sold. This spoliatory measure was one of the most characteristic features of the continental system. After the decrees of Berlin and of Milan, and the reprisals of the British Council in 1807, all the mercantile navies of Europe had fallen under this interdict. The trade of neutrals thereafter could only be carried on in the Mediterranean under the Turkish, and on the ocean under the American, flag. But since England was obliging all neutrals to pay her a toll, either in London or at Malta, and Napoleon had declared every vessel denationalised that submitted to this formality, a series of intolerable vexations to American commerce was the inevitable consequence. It was almost impossible practically to distinguish vessels which had submitted to British control from those which had evaded it, and all being liable to suspicion, the innocent often suffered for the guilty. With the

[1] *Exposé de la situation de l'Empire*, December 12, 1809.

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view of sheltering themselves from pretensions that were equally tyrannical on both sides of the Channel, the United States, not being powerful enough to enforce respect for their flag from every other country, had, by an order dated March 1, 1809, prohibited their merchant navy from entering the ports either of France or of England. By a just act of reciprocity, they ordered the seizure of every French or English vessel which might touch at American ports after the 20th of May, 1809. The measure was undeniably frank and loyal. We were advised of it two months and a half beforehand; moreover, we had but a very restricted number of ships at sea, and if, as Napoleon affirmed, one or two had been confiscated for infringing the order, it arose from their having voluntarily exposed themselves to seizure. However, even this was afterwards proved to be false by Armstrong, the American minister, and in reality there had not been a single confiscation.

It was under pretext of using reprisals against so just and deliberate an act, that Napoleon, without any preliminary notice, though at the same time giving his decree a manifestly retrospective effect, seized several hundred American ships, which, in defiance of the orders of their government, had continued to frequent our ports. Not only did he in no way warn the Americans, but he had them seized many months before the publication of the decree in France, in Italy, or in Spain. He had subsequently attracted them anew by sending assurances to their ministers, 'that France would receive the American vessels when she was certain that they had neither paid tribute nor been denationalised.'[1] Then appeared the decree which showed them, but too late, the snare in which they had allowed themselves to be caught. Another no less painful surprise still awaited them. The decree pointed only to France, her colonies, or those countries occupied by her troops; the Americans consequently believed themselves safe everywhere else. But Napoleon caused them to be seized not only in Holland and the Hanseatic towns, but in Denmark and Sweden, nay, even in Prussia, where he offered to accept their cargoes in reduction of the debt.

[1] Draft of a note to the American Minister, January 25, 1810.

General Armstrong's complaints were answered by hypocritical lamentations on the dire necessity in which Napoleon found himself of seizing a booty amounting to some hundred million francs. England alone was responsible for so grievous a state of things; but as for him, he was ready to rescind his two decrees of Berlin and of Milan if she would consent to rescind her Orders in Council of 1807. Besides, the embargo was placed on American vessels only as an act of reciprocity, and such vessels were not worthy objects of interest, as they were in direct contravention to the laws of their country.[1] Napoleon, by way of justifying the kind of trap of which the Americans found themselves the victims, allured to the French ports as they had been by a certain amount of tolerance, wrote as follows: 'You will explain to Armstrong that the law of embargo has only recently been known to us, and that as soon as I became aware of it I adopted the same measure.'[1] Nothing could be more false than this assertion, proof of which is to be found in all the previous correspondence of the Emperor on this subject. Armstrong might have sent Champagny in reply a note signed by him, written on the 21st of August, 1809, and containing the following passage: 'With the view of eluding those acts of violence with which our commerce is threatened, *America has placed an embargo on her ports*, and although the interests of France are hurt by the measure, the *Emperor nevertheless applauds this noble determination to renounce all trade rather than acknowledge the dominion of the tyrants of the sea.*' Thus, according to Champagny's admission, the American embargo had been known in France fully eight months previously.

Of all the clauses of the extraordinary treaty which Napoleon forced upon his brother, the seizure of the American ships was one of those which tried King Louis's good faith most severely. The treaty itself was both ridiculous and impracticable. Its conditions were so onerous as to render it impossible to observe them strictly; in a word, its only aim was to permit its author to seize Holland whenever he might so wish. When Louis complained of the impossibility of doing all that was

[1] Napoleon to Champagny, March 20, 1810.

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demanded in a country so ruined and with finances so heavily encumbered, Napoleon coolly retorted that he need only become bankrupt by reducing his debt one third. Louis obstinately refused to have recourse to a measure which he considered dishonourable. Under such circumstances he would have acted wisely in abstaining from signing such a treaty, and his acceptance of it can only be explained by the state of trouble and weakness to which the Emperor's violence had reduced him. At any rate he only ratified it on condition of adding the expression '*as much as possible*'—a conditional formula which proved the little confidence he felt in the validity of the engagements he was contracting:[1] nor was it long before his presentiment became realised.

King Louis returned to his capital on the 11th of April, 1810. Towards the end of the same month, the Emperor, with Marie Louise, started on a journey through Belgium and the two Dutch provinces lately united to the Empire. Labouchere's negotiation with the British Cabinet, just as it seemed about to expire from lack of encouragement, had taken a somewhat more favourable turn, owing to a new intervention by Fouché, in a question which in no manner belonged to him. That audacious and restless personage, emboldened by the impunity of his first intrigue, and beholding with sincere regret the failure through our fault of the pacific proposals, the success of which seemed to him certain had they been presented with moderation and skill, conceived the wellnigh incredible idea of substituting his own views for those of the Emperor. This time however he employed the same negotiator, flattering himself, should he succeed, that he would wrest from Napoleon the sacrifice essential to the prospect of an immediate peace, and then obtain absolution for himself by the grandeur of the results.

To attain his object he sent a mutual friend to Labou

[1] *Docum. histor. sur la Hollande.* By King Louis. Vol. iii.

[2] One is justified in believing, according to a conversation related b Mollien (*Mémoires d'un Ministre du Trésor*, vol. iii.), that Fouché for an in stant thought of mixing up some of his colleagues in the negotiations, wit a view of acting with more certainty on Napoleon.

chere, a contractor named Ouvrard, a kind of financial adventurer, ever ready for any intrigue, and he gave him instructions conceived in a much larger sense than before. These instructions could inspire Labouchere with no distrust, for Ouvrard was himself persuaded that Fouché was acting under the Emperor's orders. The negotiator on this occasion permitted discussion on every point debated between France and England, not even excluding Spain, Holland, or even Naples. Moreover, Fouché returned to his proposal relative to the United States, insinuating that he could make peace at their expense by sending an Anglo-French army to America.[1]

Napoleon was visiting the towns of Belgium with a brilliant court, inspecting, according to his wont, all the great industrial and administrative establishments, encouraging works of public utility, and distributing favours of all kinds to the multitudes that thronged his road, when he learned that Labouchere, although back again in Holland, was continuing to negotiate with the English Ministry, and had frequent conferences with Ouvrard. On the instant he made the negotiator's correspondence be sent to him by King Louis. It was delivered up to him the more readily, that Labouchere believed he was merely reproducing the Imperial inspirations. To his intense astonishment, the Emperor then discovered the new turn which had been given, without his knowledge, to overtures made by him in a completely different sense. Labouchere's good faith was evident, but it was doubtful whether he had been deceived by Ouvrard or by Fouché. Napoleon was unwilling to believe his Minister of Police guilty of so audacious a proceeding. On his return to Paris he instantly sent for Fouché, whom he vehemently upbraided for such felony; the latter, however, throwing all the blame on Ouvrard, Napoleon immediately ordered Savary to arrest him also, and finally, in this manner ascertained beyond doubt that Ouvrard was nothing but an unconscious instrument of Fouché's manœuvres.[2]

[1] See on this point a note of the police reproduced in Napoleon's *Correspondance*, dated July 9, 1810.

[2] Compare on the subject of this singular intrigue Savary's account with the *Mémoires* of Ouvrard and of Mollien, and M. Thiers' History.

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In the first outbreak of passion Napoleon thought for a moment of having his imprudent minister tried for high treason; but on reflection he no doubt perceived that a far more ridiculous than alarming impression would be produced by so strange a revelation, not only throughout Europe, but even in France. What would become of the *prestige* of the imperial autocrat when he was seen to have been thus deceived by his own agents, and when it was known that he who made kings tremble had been duped by so bold a servant, who, in his zeal, had substituted the inspirations of his own wisdom for the chimeras of his master's genius? Moreover, it was not easy to strike a man who, since the 18th Brumaire, had been the confidant of so many secrets and the accomplice of so many suspicious or bad actions. Fouché after all had not been guilty of conspiracy; the negotiation which he had opened could effect no result unless it were approved by Napoleon, and if that result had been favourable, who would have dared to blame him? He was in fact only guilty of having shown too much goodwill; he had prejudged the Emperor's intentions now, as he did at the period of levying the national guard; and as on that occasion, so now, he had calculated on being pardoned by success. He had injured no interest whatever; Napoleon's self-love alone had been touched, and if his insane pride had been capable of listening to the indirect advice given him by Fouché, how could a happier conclusion or a more advantageous bargain be imagined for France or for Napoleon, than a peace which would have left him the Rhine and Pyrenees for his frontiers, with almost the whole of Italy, and would have liberated his brothers from the hard labour of royalty?

These considerations, prompted as much by a spirit of calculation as of indulgence, had more weight in saving Fouché than the intercession of his friends or the recollection of past services. He thus escaped complete disgrace and probably an ignominious sentence, and was merely dismissed from office, re-

Ouvrard asserts that he had informed Napoleon of the negotiation he had been entrusted with, but he brings no proof to support this assertion

ceiving however as a consolation the governorship of the Roman states. But just as he was about to start for his new post, the Emperor discovered the whole mystery of the Fagan negotiation, hitherto unknown to him. This time he had no mercy. Dismissed anew, Fouché was ordered to retire to Aix, in Provence, whence he derived his senatorial rank, and to give up all the papers belonging to his office that remained in his hands. But Fouché answered that he had burnt them, and for a moment thought of flying to America to elude the vengeance he dreaded; finally however he thought better of it, and resided quietly and in obscurity in the retreat assigned to him.

As Fouché's successor in the Ministry of Police Napoleon appointed Savary, whom he called a 'man of action,' and who indeed had figured as principal actor in the two most odious episodes of the Emperor's life, the execution of the *Duc d'Enghien* and the arrest of Ferdinand of Spain. The news caused a deep and painful sensation in Paris. In his memoirs, which are a masterpiece of historical falsification, disguised beneath a veil of good-nature and military frankness, Savary, in the following terms, himself describes the effect his appointment produced upon the public mind. 'I inspired universal terror; every one at once prepared to be off; nothing was spoken of but exile, imprisonment, nay even worse; in short, I believe that news of the plague having broken out on some part of the coast would not have frightened people more than did my appointment as Minister of Police.[1]

It would be impossible to describe the universal impression more correctly. Savary's advent to the Ministry of Police resulted in making Fouché more popular. Every one knew that however cruel the latter might have been, it was chiefly owing to fear, as in so many instances during the Reign of Terror, but that by nature he was more humane than otherwise. Nor was any one ignorant that on many occasions he had softened unduly harsh orders in their execution, and by skilful temporising had saved Napoleon from many useless cruelties. In short, even his cynical, scoffing scepticism, his long experience of men and

[1] *Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo*, vol. iv.

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things, his old instincts of a worn-out, fault-finding revolutionist, seemed to be the warrant of a certain independence of mind. It was felt that he passed judgment on his master; that Napoleon would never be to him a religion, as he was to those then called 'Mamelukes'; that he was capable of resisting him to a certain degree, nay, if need be, of mystifying him, and would never submit to be merely a passive and blind instrument in his hands. Savary, on the contrary, was the man of orders and implicit obedience. He openly boasted of his unlimited attachment: hence the fear he inspired was equally unlimited.

The Emperor's relations with his brother had not improved since Louis went back to his capital. It is easy to conceive the sentiments with which that poor King returned to his subjects after a journey which had cost them two provinces, a foreign occupation, and the intolerable vexations of our customs system, not to mention the other conditions of a disastrous treaty. Louis's submission could have no excuse either in his own eyes or those of the Dutch, except the hope that he might compensate for such deep humiliation by the importance of his services. They could pardon him but on one condition—namely, that he would use every effort in his power to soften the severity of the compact he felt constrained to sign in order to preserve to them some remnant of national existence. All the old difficulties however continued, aggravated by fresh complications arising from the military occupation, and now supplemented by that of the customs.

King Louis carried out his promises regarding the nobility and the marshals to his brother's entire satisfaction; but although doing his best to raise the navy he found it impossible, with his exhausted exchequer, to satisfy the demands of the treaty. That, according to him, was a question of time. He did not refuse to increase his army to the standard agreed upon, but contended that allowance should be made for the troops he maintained in Spain on the Emperor's account. The American ships he consented to give up, but not those of the Dutch which had borrowed the flag of the United States. He did not oppose the establishment of our line of custom-

houses along the coast of Holland; but when the French agents, penetrating into all the small inlets of the sea in the interior of the country, arrogated to themselves the right of inspecting all the produce of Holland herself, thus adding the petty vexations of the local tolls to those of the custom-house, and at last instituting commissions to try the delinquents, the King protested against such an usurpation of his rights, and set at liberty all who had been arrested. The fewer were the prerogatives left to him, the more he insisted on making them respected. He could not, it is true, venture to show any resentment against the Emperor, but he thought his rights as sovereign might perhaps permit him to abstain from any sign of cordiality. Consequently he received the *chargé d'affaires* of France, M. Sérurier, with marked coldness. Without in any way pretending to retain ministers who had displeased the Emperor, he still considered he was fully entitled to write them some words of condolence, as he did for instance to Mollerus; and lastly, he dared to use his royal privilege by dismissing the burgomaster of Amsterdam, who had opposed the fortification of that town.

Herein King Louis deceived himself: his power did not extend to this point, so strange was the kind of royalty which had been created for him. The Emperor's letters grew more and more imperious and threatening; 'the die is cast,' writes Napoleon to him under date of May 20, 1810. 'You are incorrigible. . . . Neither counsel, advice, nor affection, must be shown to you; nothing but menace and force. What are all those prayers and those mysterious fasts which you have ordered? *Louis, you do not want to reign for any length of time;* all your actions betray the sentiments of your mind far better than do your private letters. Listen to one who knows more about it than you do. Turn back from the wrong road you have taken; be a Frenchman in heart, or your people will drive you away, and you will leave Holland an object of pity and of derision to the Dutch. States are governed by the aid of reason and policy *and not by acrimony and weakness.*'[1]

[1] This letter has not been published in Napoleon's *Correspondance.*

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Such cruel aspersions on a brother announced clearly that Napoleon had resolved not to shew him any further consideration. Two days later, on May 23, 1810, he learned that Louis had, at a diplomatic audience, passed over Sérurier, the *chargé d'affaires*, without addressing a word to him, and that a coachman in the ambassador's livery had been beaten in a street row. He wrote to Louis a second time, overwhelming him with the most cutting reproaches, terminating his letter in the following insulting terms: 'Write me no more of your commonplace phrases. You have now been repeating them to me for the last three years, and every day proves their falseness. This is the last letter I shall write to you during my lifetime.'[1]

[1] This letter, as undoubtedly authentic as all the others I have above quoted, is, in like manner, omitted in the *Correspondance*. So many and such grave omissions sufficiently attest the spirit of partiality and of extravagant apology in which that collection has been formed. It is, however, none the less precious for history, from the fact that its authors, while suppressing and mutilating many important documents, have not always understood the sense or bearing of those they have allowed to remain. But while restricting themselves to the reproduction of such documents exclusively which the Emperor would himself have consented to be published, in accordance with the singular order imposed on them by their President, Prince Jerome Napoleon, the editors of the *Correspondance* might at least have dispensed themselves from adding manifestly false ones, fabricated at St. Helena to meet the exigencies of the case. I have already passed judgment in a previous volume on a pretended letter of Napoleon's to Murat, supposed to have been written on March 29, 1808, the authenticity of which is absolutely untenable, but which for fifty years has deceived historians. The editors of the *Correspondance* have reproduced another letter, deriving it from the same source—namely, the *Mémorial de Las Cases*, which does still less honour, if possible, to their scruples and critical acumen. That letter, published by Las Cases in the *Mémorial* as having been communicated to him by the prisoner of St. Helena, is supposed to have been addressed to King Louis by the Emperor, under date of April 3, 1808. It presents all the characteristics of an historical falsification, and does not stand examination for an instant. Not only is it dated from the château of Marsac, where the Emperor arrived only a fortnight later and left no trace of any document in the archives—especially noteworthy in the case of such an unusually long document—but its tone and style are in such marked contrast with all the other letters written by Napoleon to his brother Louis at that period, that it is sufficient to read it after perusing the others to perceive at once that it is a purely apocryphal document. While pretending to treat of an insignificant act of smuggling, it is in reality an interminable and verbose defence of the continental system and of the good in-

After such treatment, illusion was no longer possible, and King Louis's last doubts vanished at sight of the increasing tentions of the Emperor. He who never had any but hard words and harsh counsels for his brother, complaisantly speaks to him, 'of the goodness of his heart, of the simplicity of his manners, of the love which the Dutch bore him.' He prides himself on his kindness and impartiality even towards England: 'Every day I feel that peace is becoming more necessary. (This was at the very time when he was preparing the treachery of Bayonne!) I have neither passionate dislike nor unconquerable hatred against England . . . England may be rich and prosperous, I care little, provided that France and her allies be so likewise.' Instead of addressing his brother directly, as in other letters, he gives him the title of 'Your Majesty,' which he never did except in official communications. Lastly, in the same degree that his usual style is brief, precise, and solid, this long harangue in favour of the blockade is vague, diffuse, and drawling. It is clear, that if it was written by the same personage, it was so only long after the events, based on half-effaced recollections, with totally different objects in view from those of the moment when it is supposed to have been penned. At that period, in fact, Napoleon was, above all else, occupied with the Spanish affairs, and he had but just written to Louis offering him the crown of Spain; only five days had elapsed since he had made him that offer (March 27, 1808); he was impatiently expecting his answer, and certainly was in no humour to send him a discussion of the kind, as declamatory as it was useless. In addition to all this presumptive moral evidence of the falsity of the letter of April 3, 1808, I can cite a *positive fact*, which clearly proves its defective authenticity. The Emperor, with the view of justifying the blockade, recalls to his brother that '*all the navies* of Europe have been destroyed,' by England; adding, 'Russia, *Sweden*, France, and Spain, which have so many means of possessing vessels and sailors, do not venture to risk one squadron outside their ports.' Is it not strange that Napoleon here ignores that *Sweden*, far from having then joined our system, was at war with us, as well as with Russia, and that Bernadotte was marching with an army against her, while England, instead of having destroyed her navy, was paying her a subsidy of thirty million francs? They forgot at St. Helena that Sweden did not make peace with us until nearly two years later. It is stated, moreover, in the same letter, and in consequence of the same mistake, that Portugal was about to submit and that, as a result of such submission, '*the entire seaboard* of Europe would be closed to the English, with the exception of *Turkey*'—a second instance of forgetfulness on the subject of Sweden, no less inexplicable than the first, if we admit the authenticity of this letter. But however one may understand Napoleon's mistake, when labouring, at a distance from every source of information, to reinstate his reign in public opinion, and to alter facts that must have oppressed his memory, such inadvertence is inconceivable on the part of men who have undertaken the mission of clearing up facts of history. The editors of the *Correspondance de Napoléon* might have raised a monument to truth; but they have too often produced nothing but the

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number of French troops sent to take possession of his kingdom under his very eyes. By the terms of the treaty, their number was not to exceed 6000 men; but it already amounted to 20,000. Instead of limiting themselves to guarding the coasts, as had been agreed upon, they successively took possession of every town, and the circle they traced round Amsterdam became smaller and smaller day by day. Several times, King Louis relates, the general commanding tried to entice him to an interview between Amsterdam and Utrecht, but he prudently declined the proposal.

The troops soon approached the capital. The King demanded explanations from the French *chargé d'affaires*, who answered him by declaring in an official note, 'that in consequence of the rumours which had reached his Majesty the Emperor and King, attributing to him intentions of placing a garrison in Amsterdam, His Majesty had desired him to deny such intentions, and to declare that he had no idea of occupying the capital.'[1] This same order was however given a very few days later by Napoleon, as soon as he had ascertained that the capital could not have time to place itself in a state of defence.[2] Oudinot was to assign as a reason, 'the insult offered to our eagles at Haarlem,' and Sérurier was to 'hint that the only method of extricating themselves from the mess was to receive the French troops at Amsterdam.' According to another letter written by Napoleon himself,[3] the insult offered to our eagles simply consisted of a 'refusal to allow our *patrols* to pass.' But at the point now reached any pretext was sufficient to bring

work of partisans. And, singularly enough, while following with eminent docility the programme traced out for them by Prince Jerome, they were only carrying out Napoleon's own idea. The writer of these lines has under his eye the beginning of a copy of the *Correspondance* corrected by Bourrienne by the Emperor's orders, from which all dangerous or troublesome passages had been carefully effaced. This work, which only reached to the middle of the campaign in Italy, left the timid alterations of the editors of the *Correspondance* a long way behind. It would have rendered all the falsehoods of St. Helena utterly useless.

[1] Note of Sérurier, addressed to Roell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated June 16, 1810.

[2] Napoleon to Champagny and to Clarke, June 24, 1810.

[3] To Champagny, June 27.

matters to a crisis. In view of the danger now pressing him, Louis once more summoning his counsellors, proposed to them to defend Amsterdam to the last extremity, and to call the nation to arms. But they respectfully represented to him the inutility of such a defence, and the misfortunes which such a course would entail upon their country.

Holland was too much oppressed and exhausted any longer to possess the energy necessary for such a struggle. King Louis, disheartened and undeceived, decided on abdicating in favour of his eldest son. He embodied his justification in the form of a farewell message addressed to the Legislative Body, in which the following touching passage occurred: 'Perhaps I alone am an obstacle to the reconciliation of the country with France. Should this be so, I might find some consolation in dragging on the remainder of my wandering and languid life at a distance from the first objects of my affection. . . As for you, gentlemen, I should be very unhappy could I think it possible that you would not do justice to my good intentions. May the end of my career prove to the nation and to you, that I have never deceived you; that I never had but one object in view, the interest of the country, and that the faults I may have committed are solely due to my zeal, which made me desire not only what was good, but the best that could be attained, despite the difficulty of the circumstances.'

After the preparation of this message, King Louis, accompanied by a few servants who remained faithful to him, fled with the utmost secresy, passing our troops with some difficulty, and escaping from his kingdom as if from a prison. The people are generally good judges of the character of their sovereign, especially if he be a foreigner, and King Louis's memory is cherished in Holland as that of an honest, kind-hearted man. His virtues too should be the more honoured, because to them alone he owed all his misfortunes.

Quitting Haarlem during the night of the 1st of July, 1810, he never stopped until he reached the baths of Tœplitz in Bohemia, where he arrived on the 9th. For nearly a whole month Napoleon, and every one else in Europe, was ignorant of

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what had become of the unhappy King who had fled like an outlaw. His disappearance, which authorised every sort of conjecture, still further deepened the injurious effects of his flight, in itself so condemnatory of Napoleon. Such a rupture foiled all the Emperor's plans. He had flattered himself that he could have carried on his enterprise to the end without noise or scandal, and have gently stifled Louis's protests within the four walls of some magnificent and solitary residence; but if we may believe Savary, he seems to have been completely overpowered and disheartened by the news. The mask of wisdom and moderation which he had assumed on marrying Marie Louise fell down suddenly, and he reappeared in all his violence, as a usurper and an oppressor of the rights of his own family. By a coincidence singularly annoying to him, another of his brothers, Lucien, who had hitherto been living in the Roman States, considering his residence no longer safe since their union with France, escaped by sea at the very same period, preferring to risk being made prisoner by the English to remaining the subject of Napoleon. Even Joseph, despite his taste for the honours of royalty, seems to have been on the verge of following their example. On the 8th of August, 1810, he wrote to Napoleon: 'If the arrangements with which I am menaced are carried out, I shall have no choice left but to return to France . . . to regain in obscurity those affections and that peace of which the throne has deprived me, without giving me anything in exchange; for Spain to me is nothing but a place of torture.' That Fouché should be traversing Italy as a fugitive to elude the Emperor's vengeance, or that General Sarrazin should fly from Boulogne in a fishing boat, though with the certainty of falling into the hands of the English, might up to a certain point be explained; but how heavy must his yoke have become, when it was intolerable even to his brothers, deeply interested as they were in supporting him!

Europe learned from a simple imperial decree, inserted in the *Moniteur*, and dated July 9, 1810, that Holland henceforth formed part of the territory of the Empire. The pretext offered in vindication of this outrageous act was the necessity for closing

the country against the English, and of rendering the continental blockade more effective. But how was it possible not to perceive that similar motives might be urged against every European state, and that all must have felt their existence menaced in the same manner? The Roman States had been annexed to France in the previous month of December. Holland therefore was the second country of which Napoleon had taken possession within six months, by a sovereign decree of his will, without feeling himself bound to account for it to any one. The only notification which he thought fit to make to foreign powers, was to inform Russia that a mere change of persons had taken place, as for some time past he had virtually been master of Holland. So long as it suited him to maintain a shadow of government in conquered countries, as in Naples, Westphalia, or Spain, he asserted that such states continued independent. On the day when it pleased him to take possession of them, he as peremptorily asserted that such independence had never been more than nominal, without troubling himself about so flagrant a contradiction. In the present instance, even to his own relatives, whom he could not hope to deceive, he threw all the responsibility of this unfortunate event on his brother Louis's bad health, writing on the 20th July to his mother and to Jerome that 'all his conduct is inexplicable, and can only be attributed to his state of illness.' Many years afterwards, in his confidences at St. Helena, he still attributed what he called Louis's oddities to the wretched state of his health; and bewailing the obstinacy which had made him ultimately fly from a throne, and mistake uproar for renown, he adds, 'What alternative was left me? Could I have abandoned Holland to our enemies, or was I to appoint a new king?'[1]

It would result from these retrospective lamentations that Napoleon had most reluctantly been forced to annex Holland. The narrative of facts has proved the light in which the pretence of such an obligation ought to be viewed. Napoleon sent to Holland, as representative of his government, the former Consul, Lebrun, who had become the imperial *Architrésorier*, a

[1] *Mémorial* de Las Cases.

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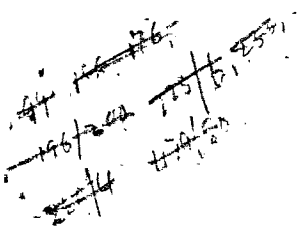
Byzantine title which sufficiently well defined the personage himself and the services expected from him. Prince Lebrun possessed all the qualities of an excellect prefect, and nothing else was needed in order to rule Holland. The Dutch did not long remain in doubt as to the nature of the reproaches cast by Napoleon on his brother's administration. The first benefit conferred on them by the Emperor's representative was the bankruptcy of three-quarters of the public debt, although such bankruptcy was falsely veiled under the designation of reduction to one-third, for the state creditors instead of receiving eighty were assigned only twenty millions. This was what Napoleon in his letters to Lebrun called 'the economy which ought to result from the union.' According to his calculation this reduction of the public debt was only a first act of economy, and he added, 'The Legislative Body will be another item for reduction; foreign affairs another; the Council of State a third; and the Civil List a fourth.'[1] All these different items of economy and reduction could in Holland be summarised in one, namely, the economy of her liberty and her national independence. No doubt there is nothing less expensive than slavery, but at the same time nothing more unproductive, more sterile, or more ruinous, and had the Dutch been consulted they would have answered at once that this economy cost them too dear; for it cost them their country.

[1] Napoleon to Prince Lebrun, July 23, 1810.



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